

**THE DE-CLERICALIZATION OF PREACHING MINISTRY:
LAY PREACHING RECOVERED**

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In Partial Fulfillment
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Abstract

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This project addresses the problem of the monopolization of the ministry of preaching by modern clergy. This clericalization of the preaching function assumes that it is the cleric's primary right, by training and vocation, to perform this vital ministry rather than enable laity through its practice. Apparently, with the rise of the institutionalized church, the ministry of preaching by laity was restricted as the leadership of the church increasingly utilized proclamation as a means of reinforcing the structures of clerical control.

This de-voicing of the laity is important because it signaled a significant departure from the heritage left by the founders of the Church of the first century. Christianity began as a lay movement. In the Church of the New Testament, the ministry of preaching was a shared witness among those capable of proclaiming the word. The most casual reading of the New Testament reveals that the Spirit was indiscriminate when it came to equipping believers for this area of service. Therefore, Chapter 2 examines the practice of lay preaching in the New Testament Church. This chapter addresses the biblical and historical

legitimacy of lay preaching as a means of promoting the expansion of the Christian faith. Chapter 3 traces the historical influences which contributed to the clericalization of preaching in the post-apostolic age. This chapter identifies some of the critical internal and external forces collaborating in the restrictions placed upon the preaching ministry. Chapter 4 suggests theological, psychological, and pedagogical essentials for the recovery of lay preaching. This chapter discusses the necessary reeducation required of both laity and clergy in order to reverse the processes of clericalization through the empowerment of the Church. Finally, Chapter 5 contains the summary and conclusions of the study.

This project concludes that lay preaching will be a vital element in the revitalization of the Christian Church in the North American context. The recovery of lay preaching will demonstrate an unreserved commitment on the part of the clergy to enable the laity.

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Dedication

To the four women who enriched my life beyond measure!

*To My Faithful Wife, Prudence . . .
Whose love has amazed and humbled me*

*To My Daughters, Kristin and Karin . . .
Whose gentleness has inspired me*

*And To My Mother, Lillian, now awaiting the Resurrection . . .
Whose passion for God has molded me.*

I Thank My God always on behalf of You!

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Problem Addressed by the Project

This project addresses the problem of the monopolization of the ministry of preaching by modern clergy in the American Church.

Importance of the Problem

The monopolization of preaching ministry is a critical problem in the American Church because it appears to be symptomatic of a significantly larger problem: the "clericalization" of the local church. Mark Gibbs and T. Ralph Morton poignantly address this problem by stating:

Without deliberate planning and certainly without any nefarious scheming on the part of the clergy, the congregation has developed a structure that depends entirely on the minister. The life of the congregation has grown up around him and depends on him and it does not matter whether he is called priest or pastor, rector or minister. His central position has determined the organizations and activities of the congregation and the nature of its piety. This is seen as so natural that most people will say that it is only right; that this is why you have ministers at all; that this is their joy; for this they are trained. But for all that, this is what is crippling the life of the church.¹

The "clericalization" of local church ministry assumes that it is the cleric's primary right to monopolize certain public ministries (e.g. preaching) because of his/her

¹Mark Gibbs and T. Ralph Morton, God's Frozen People (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964), 49.

professional training and/or status. Preaching ministry stands at the forefront of those ministries which have been monopolized by modern clergy. More than any other form of service it is almost unanimously viewed as the exclusive domain of the professional minister. This phenomenon is important because it signals a significant break with early Christian history. According to Michael Green's Evangelism in the Early Church, "Christianity was from its inception a lay movement, and so it remained for a remarkably long time."²

In the Church of the New Testament the ministry of preaching was a shared witness among those presenting themselves as called and gifted by the Spirit. Preaching ministry was open to anyone (social rank or academic attainment notwithstanding) who had been swept up into the redemptive activity of God in the world. Adolph Harnack acknowledges this fact in The Mission and Expansion of Christianity when he identifies these lay evangelists as "informal missionaries."³ Thus, one reads in the New Testament that Jesus,⁴ the Twelve,⁵ the ministering women

²Michael Green, Evangelism in the Early Church (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 173.

³Adolph Harnack, The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries (New York: Putnam, 1908), 368.

⁴John 7:15.

⁵Acts 4:13.

who had been called by Jesus,⁶ the original seven deacons,⁷ and a number of others functioned very effectively as lay preachers. The Spirit, who indiscriminately bestowed gifts upon whomsoever It would,⁸ apparently was no respecter of persons when it came to equipping believers for this area of service. This reality of the shared witness of preaching effectively neutralized the tendency of human leadership to consolidate power at the expense of the ecclesial community. The Jerusalem conference of Acts 15 witnesses to the interest of the leadership of the early Church in inviting dialogue as the Apostolic Church attempted to resolve the "Gentile problem."⁹ In the Apostolic Church both leaders and confessors worked in complementarity with each other. It is the view of this writer that the cooperative relationship of leadership to the Church in the first and second centuries must be resurrected as a paradigm for the modern Church.

The gradual loss of lay preaching is important because it signaled a significant departure from one of the pivotal practices of early Christian community. It is clear from the rapid expansion of the New Testament Church that the

⁶John 4:28,29; Luke 24:10.

⁷Acts 6:5-8, 8:4,5.

⁸1 Cor. 12:1-11.

⁹For a more detailed discussion of the significance of this issue for the early church, see Joseph B. Tyson, "The Emerging Church and the Problem of Authority in the Book of Acts," Interpretation 23, no. 2 (April 1988): 140-42.

preaching ministry of a gender- and class-inclusive laity was central to the Church's progress. Green argued:

If there was no distinction in the early church between full time ministers and laymen in this responsibility to spread the gospel by every means possible, there was equally no distinction between the sexes in the matter. It was axiomatic that every Christian was called to be a witness for Christ, not only by life but by lip. Everyone was to be an apologist. . . ."¹⁰

One cannot help but notice that in the book of Acts, Luke is careful to alert his readers that scattered believers "went everywhere preaching the word."¹¹ Apparently the ministry of preaching was a shared witness among those called and equipped by the Spirit to proclaim the word. That shared witnessing privilege distributed responsibility for the dissemination of the Gospel message and thereby undermined any consolidation of clerical power without concomitant accountability to the body of believers. However, from the third century onward and during the Middle Ages one may observe a marked difference in the "balance of power" between the clergy and the laity. With the rise of the institutionalized Church and the need to thoroughly indoctrinate its confessors, the ministry of preaching among the laity was restricted (and in some cases legally forbidden) as the leadership of the Church increasingly utilized proclamation as a means of reinforcing the

¹⁰Green, 175.

¹¹Acts 8:4.

structures of hierarchy.¹² Under this new ecclesiastical arrangement, word and sacrament were strictly controlled. Unfortunately, in spite of the Reformation (Luther's priesthood of believers doctrine notwithstanding) this clerical control over the exercise of preaching persisted to such a degree, that while other ministries of the Church may have been shared, rarely was the authoritative ministry of preaching shared with laity. Could this have been (partly) due to clergy's need to rigidly maintain official role and class stratification? Edward Schillebeeckx would argue that this was precisely the problem. He wrote:

The various theologies of the Church's official ministries, including that of the preaching office, do not originate in a vacuum. They come about for the most part in a struggle for authority, in a process involving the formation of "roles" in a group or community and as part of system differentiation, frequently even as a justification of historically acquired positions of power or monopoly.¹³

One can only wonder if this historical phenomenon explains why (even to the present) "we" are generally identified as preachers and "they" (the laity) are not.

This problem is also important because of its debilitating impact upon the life and witness of the Church. Clearly the early Christian Church was a community which

¹²T. Harwood Pattison, The History of Christian Preaching (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publ. Soc., 1903), 396.

¹³Edward Schillebeeckx, "The Right of Every Christian to Speak in the Light of Evangelical Experience 'In the Midst of Brothers and Sisters,'" in Preaching and the Non-Ordained: An Interdisciplinary Study, ed. Nadine Foley (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1983), 11.

promoted participation by all its members.¹⁴ One can well imagine why this was the case. At its inception Christianity was a foreign set of beliefs and values challenging the prevailing ideology of the Roman empire.¹⁵ If the new religion was to survive then the personal ministry of each member was not only requested but coveted and required. It is not surprising that a pneumatic theology of gifts appeared very early in Christian history and was communicated to various congregations in different locales.¹⁶ According to Scripture every believer had some gift for service.¹⁷ Because of its fruitful exercise the ministry of preaching ranked among the foremost. It was not by accident that preaching ministry directly proclaimed the uniqueness of the new faith to the non-Christian community.¹⁸ Clearly, the preaching privilege belonged to the entire saved community.¹⁹ However, by the third century, one may observe through the establishment of the "monarchical episcopate"²⁰ that a very clear class

¹⁴Acts 2:42-45.

¹⁵Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of the Expansion of Christianity, 5 vols. (New York: Harper and Bros., 1937), 1:65.

¹⁶1 Cor. 12:1-11; Rom. 12:4-8; Eph. 4:11-15.

¹⁷1 Cor. 12:4-11.

¹⁸Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:4-8; Rom. 10:10-15.

¹⁹Green, 166-77.

²⁰Kenneth A. Strand, Three Essays in Early Church History (Ann Arbor: Braun-Brumfield, 1967), 9.

dichotomy emerged between the clergy and the laity.

Williston Walker, Church historian, pointed out the impact that this organizational arrangement had on the ministry of the community:

The control of the choice of the presbyters, deacons and lower clergy lay in the hand of their local bishop, by whom they were ordained. The presbyters were the bishop's advisers. With his consent they administered the sacraments. They preached. As congregations grew more numerous in a city, a presbyter would be placed in immediate charge of each, and their importance thereby enhanced, from its relative depression, immediately after the rise of the monarchical episcopate.²¹

With the new reality of an official, professional ministry--based upon the technical distinction between the kleros and the laos--a fixed distinction was consciously established in ecclesiastical practice.²² Consequently, preaching belonged to the presbyters by the bishop's consent. By restricting proclaimational ministry primarily to clergy, the laity's level of participation in the life and witness of the Church was gradually reduced from its originally central involvement in the life and mission of the Church to a peripheral involvement. Collective servanthood was gradually transformed into a detached spectatorism.

Today in many churches of the Western world, the same observable detachment on the part of the laity from the

²¹Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1970), 83.

²²Ibid., 82.

local churches' ministry can still be seen. This detachment has resulted in a lethargic, almost catatonic spectatorism (particularly in many of our mainline congregations) which separates members from meaningful involvement in service. Large numbers of our parishioners have absolutely no vision of a ministry to which they are personally called and for which they are immediately accountable to God for its faithful performance. Week after week, some of the above-mentioned parishioners of American churches take the worship service as an opportunity to be nurtured by and in some cases to evaluate the pastors' performance. Sadly, this spectatoristic outlook results in a serious loss of witness by the Church to the community and the world.

Recently this alarming situation has caught the attention of many Western ecclesiologists. During the last twenty-five years a flood of materials has been produced in an attempt to understand the critical biblical and theological relationship between the clergy and the laity. This interest in the clergy-laity relationship may be due to the increasing demands of the more educated, more financially independent, less clergy-dependent parishioners who populate the pews of the contemporary Church. As a group of Anglican theologians observed:

The increasing numbers of committed and critical laity have inevitably brought in certain tensions between clergy and laity. These arise not only from theological questions but also from historical developments of all sorts-personal, psychological and sociological-which might ruefully be summed up

in the phrase "churchpeople were saved to be free: yet everywhere they are in chains."²³

In this writer's opinion, the tensions pointed out by these theologians can be helpful in causing both clergy and laity to reconsider the authentic nature of the ministry of the church and what should be the respective role of each in ecclesiastical life. It is not the purpose of this paper to negate, nullify, or minimize the need for and primary function of the pastor in her/his local congregation. Rather, the intent of this project is to call the leadership of the church back to the task of unchaining the laity to do the real work of the Christian community in the strategic areas of preaching and teaching. This level of involvement is crucial because it is presumably at the level of indoctrination that the collective self-consciousness of the local church is ultimately formed. Indeed, the laity of today may soon accept no less than this public ministry of preaching and teaching as its literacy in theology continues to increase.²⁴ The interest of this writer is to see clergy take the initiative in this process of recapturing this foundational component of the witness of the local church.

²³"The Common Statement," All Are Called: Towards a Theology of the Laity, ed. Patrick Rodger (London: CIO Publishing, 1985), 7.

²⁴A significant advance in clarifying the relationship between the ordained ministry and the laity can be found in World Council of Churches, Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (Geneva: WCC, 1982). Paragraphs 1-14, along with paragraphs 22 and 33, provide some of the clearest thinking published in recent years on this important topic.

The relevance of this project lies in its potential to revitalize the intensity of the churches' witness to the Western world. In the Third World and in developing nations, the ministry of preaching among laypersons is shouldering the churches' outreach by making a significant impact upon the structures of physical, mental, spiritual and sociological oppression. One might argue for a direct correlation between the active ministry of lay preaching and the vitality of many local congregations around the world. This project holds that the same vitality which characterizes the church in many countries outside of America can be resurrected in the American church through activating the now dormant ministry of lay preaching.

Thesis

The thesis of this project is that the recovery of lay preaching will contribute to the revitalization of local church ministry.

Definitions of Major Terms

The reader should understand that the major terms in this project are used in the contexts as follows:

Clericalization: the gradual transformation of that which legitimately belongs to the Christian church at large into the primary and/or exclusive possession of the professional clergy. According to the previously cited "Common Statement," clericalism expresses "at bottom a

confusion between the status of individuals and a theological understanding of their calling."²⁵

Laity, Laypersons: the non-paid volunteers who donate their time, talent, and resources to the service of God in and through the local church.

Local Church: congregations (whether small or large) meeting in various localities for worship, service, and fellowship. The "people of God," ordained at baptism. Also, the "Body of Christ" in the New Testament.

Preaching: that ministry in which one or more persons authoritatively speak for God to the people of God; that form of proclamation in which the word and acts of God in history are explicated, illuminated, and applied in the world. A specific authoritative, oral proclamation which for the purposes of this project, is to be distinguished from other forms of Christian witness.

Lay preacher: that person, called and gifted by the Spirit, who proclaims the Christian Gospel in liturgical assembly or in non-liturgical outreach ministry to the world; ordination is not a prerequisite for the designation, lay preacher.

Work Previously Done in the Field

Although the amount of work previously done in the area of lay preaching is scarce indeed, a significant amount of writing has been undertaken in the area of lay ministry.

²⁵"The Common Statement," All Are Called, 8.

And because lay preaching is but one expression of lay ministry, a brief analysis of materials in lay ministry will be followed by a critique of those works which address the issue of lay preaching specifically.

The larger problem of the unrealized ministry of the laity has been written about since the early 1960s. One writer to take up the question in 1962 was Howard Grimes. In The Rebirth of the Laity, Grimes calls for the renewal of the Church's understanding of the fundamental concept of church. His starting point is an exegetical one in that he begins with the word laos (people) in the New Testament.

Grimes notes:

The use of the word "laity" to denote these nonprofessional members of the Church's ministry is considered by some as a misuse of the term, for the various forms of the word "lay" come from the Greek word *laos*, which ordinarily means the whole people. Thus *ho laos tou Theou*, as applied to the Church, means "the people of God." In this sense all persons who have been called into the "Body of Christ" are *laos* (people, laymen), a people called of God to be his special agency in the world.²⁶

This work is useful because it presents what this writer considers a substantial theological rationale for the place of the laity as being a place of honor in the body. Grimes' historical section is especially helpful because it provides an instructive survey of the various permutations the concept of laity has experienced in Christian history from the first century to the twentieth.

²⁶Howard Grimes, The Rebirth of the Laity (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 11.

The Ministry of the Laity is another insightful work.

In it Francis Ayres discusses the question of church membership from the perspective of what it means to be a Christian in the middle of the twentieth century. It is neatly divided into two divisions--announcement and exhortation. In his announcement, Ayres confronts the lay reader with the affirmation of every believer's God-given ministry.²⁷ In fact, Ayres concept of lay ministry is captured in the following statement:

You are a minister of Christ. You have a share in the ministry of the church. The primary word is "ministry," for a minister is one who shares in the ministry. In earlier translations of the Bible, the words are used where "service," "to serve," and "servant" are now used. The ministry of the church is therefore, the service of the church to the world; a minister is one who shares in that task. In order to clarify the nature of the church, Hendrik Kraemer has said that the church is ministry. The point is that the church does not first exist and then decide whether and how it will serve. The church exists to serve the world and has no being except as it is a servant.²⁸

Ayres then proceeds to call the laity to service in an equally striking manner:

"You are a minister." That is an affirmation accepted through trust. "Fulfill your ministry" indicates obedient response. And between these statements stands the "therefore" as a reminder that the two are interactive as well as inseparable. One does not wait until one fully grasps the "you are" before one responds. In "fulfilling" one plumbs the depths of the "you are". There needs

²⁷Francis Ayres, The Ministry of the Laity (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 25.

²⁸Ibid., 31.

always to be an alternation between the two, the alternation of faith, the alternation between trust and obedience, between belief in what God has done and man's response.²⁹

Ayres then concludes with a forthright appeal to the laity to be what scripture pictures them to be--energetic, active, ministering. He even chides those who are content to sit back and exist as "clericalized laymen,"³⁰ that is those who are comfortable with laxity as a way of life.

Of all of the works reviewed, one of the more fascinating is entitled God's Frozen People. Mark Gibbs and T. Ralph Morton contribute to the discussion of clericalization as an ecclesiastical phenomenon as pointedly as any writer reviewed. The starting point of their call for a rejuvenated laity affirms the idea that the Church is crippled by ministerial dependency.³¹ It should be noted that this indictment was lodged at a time of worldwide interest in reviving lay involvement in Christian churches. Thus the language is frequently pointed. However their point should not be missed. Ministerially dependent structures are defeating the purpose for the churches' existence. This writer agrees that ministerially-centered models for the Church make it extremely difficult for local church ministry to occur as a shared enterprise, and it is

²⁹Ibid., 73.

³⁰Ibid., 129.

³¹Gibbs and Morton, 49.

this looming institutional obstruction which Gibbs and Morton trace for the reader. They also contribute to the ongoing discussion of the clergy/laity relationship by arguing for laity's full participation in the "organizational life"³² of the Church by working out clergy and laity's complimentarity on various fronts, including worship:

The layman is not content now merely to attend the worship of his local church. He knows that if the worship is to be worship for him he must participate. And participation means contribution. The minister holds the key to this, because his is the responsibility for the conduct of worship, and therefore the responsibility of finding means for greater, more effective lay participation in worship. This is what it meant to say that he "leads" the worship of the church.³³

Two relatively recent works written in the late seventies and early eighties are A New Frontier: Every Believer a Minister and Lay Ministry: Empowering The People Of God. In New Frontier Rex Edwards presents the strength of the Christian Church as being its living out the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. One strength of this work lies in its survey of the first three centuries of Christian history and its emphasis upon the participation of laypersons in the early execution of Christian mission.³⁴

³²Ibid., 112.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Rex Edwards, A New Frontier: Every Believer A Minister (Omaha: Pacific Press Publ. Assoc., 1979), 25-52.

In Lawrence O. Richards and Gilbert R. Martin's Lay Ministry, the issue of laity is approached almost totally from the angle of Christian identity and giftedness. This is an interesting biblical/theological study of lay ministry. It rises out of contemporary evangelical tradition and has much to say about the ordering of relationships within the body of Christ.³⁵

As this writer evaluated the aforementioned works, their rather obvious strength lies in their persistent call for clergy to de-centralize itself by seeking to emulate the servant Christ of the New Testament. Each writer, in his/her own style, finds ample mobility within Scripture, history, and Church policy to enable laity to reach its full stature in God. It is believed that the contribution of the writers cited here is that their work has added to the "hearing readiness" of the contemporary Christian Church. Preceding this idea of "hearing readiness" is the assumption (deduced from this writer's study of church history) that a major change such as the one proposed by this project would be the culmination of many small changes in the practices of the Church. The beginnings of the transformation in the way lay persons understand themselves have already been initiated by sermons, discussions, prayer, Bible study, etc. Though this project goes beyond their work, the previous

³⁵Lawrence O. Richards and Gilbert R. Martin, Lay Ministry: Empowering the People of God (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 189-237.

authors' arguments for greater lay participation have laid a foundation which will aid this project in gaining a much wider hearing.

In the specific area of lay preaching there is an alarming paucity of serious, scholarly work. Of the few works found which broach the subject, generally a how-to approach has been adopted which unfortunately lacks theological or sociological reflection upon the task and context in which lay preaching is to take place. Thus far, this writer has found three very specific works which address lay preaching as a specialized ministry.

The Lay Preacher and His Work is the first of the manual-like approaches to the subject. It does not provide a theological rationale for lay preaching, but does supply some helpful prodding for the laity to engage in this specific ministry with all seriousness:

All Christians are called to be priests and priestesses of the gospel. Upon every member rests the solemn responsibility to tell others what the Lord has done for him. Some in the church, however, even among the lay forces are called to work in a more public way. As heralds of their King's message, these are required to lift up their voices before assembled bodies of men and women. They are to persuade men, both in public and from house to house, to repent and believe. This is lay preaching. It is the response of the humble child of God to the gift within him, that is given him from above. Surely a revival of the office and work of lay preaching is our great need.³⁶

³⁶General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Home Missionary Dept., The Lay Preacher and His Work (Nashville: Southern Publ. Assoc., 1940), 10.

The rest of the book proceeds to provide the basics of how to lead persons to faith in Christ.

The second of the how-to approaches provides an arguably interesting perspective on the unique influence wielded by the lay preacher over against that of the cleric.

The author, Evan Boden, writes:

The not so obvious reason why lay people should be in the pulpit are several. But most reasons come under one heading: some people respond better to a lay preacher than to a pastor. A psychologist could give very lengthy and detailed explanations as to why this is so. Certainly, the pastor is at a disadvantage since he or she must be there routinely every Sunday at 11 a.m. The pastor is saying what is expected and is paid for it. The lay persons, however, are recognized as ones who, for six days a week, walk in the same shoes as members of the congregation, at work either outside or within the house. Preaching is not their profession, but it is their confession.³⁷

Though encouraging, this book has a colloquial rather than scholarly tone. Its major weakness is that it sometimes substitutes assertion for argument and illustration for case.

The final work of this review is by far the most intellectually satisfying book consulted. It emerges from the Catholic tradition and carries the title Preaching and the Non-Ordained. It is a scholarly, interdisciplinary set of papers delivered at a symposium sponsored by the Dominican Leadership Conference in October of 1982 at Columbus, Ohio. This collection represents the

³⁷Evan H. Boden, Guide for the Lay Preacher (Valley Forge: Judson, 1979), 13.

collaborative effort of twelve scholars, five male and seven female. What is stimulating about this book is that it is the only work discovered by this writer which attempts to take up the discussion of by what authority the laity may perform the ministry of preaching, if any. And if performed, is it ever appropriate in liturgical assembly? Understandably, these would prove provocative questions in the Roman Catholic tradition due to its officially hierachial organization and its all male priesthood. But the value of this book cannot be and should not be limited to confessing Catholics alone. It has a general application which crosses many denominational lines. Contributor Kathleen Cannon crystallizes the problem for the modern Church:

While we are certainly not the first to ask who may preach the gospel with authority in the midst of the ecclesial assembly, nevertheless there is a certain newness of urgency to the question today. The newness derives from our understanding of the ecclesiastical nature of the laity, their status as members of God's people and sharers in the salvific mission of the church.³⁸

This work on the subject was found to be very helpful because it argues forcefully that the issue of lay preaching will not be settled apart from the intentional reevaluation of the Church's teachings regarding clergy, ordination, laos, and preaching.

³⁸Kathleen Cannon, "Opening Remarks," Preaching and the Non-Ordained: An Interdisciplinary Study, ed. Nadine Foley (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1983), 8.

This writer's hope is that this project will provide a researched, scholarly rationale from a Protestant perspective on the issue of lay preaching, and show how it can be one tool for freeing the American Church from the massive inertia which presently seems to stultify it. A second contribution proceeding from this project may be its challenge to professional leadership to reassess its collective relationship to the issue of how clerical power functions in local congregations.

Scope and Limitations of the Project

As stated previously, this project is calculated to expose the biblical, historical, and theological bases for the intentional development of lay preaching in the local church. Therefore, the writer will be responsible for analyzing first the texts of the New Testament that bear on this subject. Then, selected materials in the area of Christian origins will be examined. This project is not intended to serve as a how-to manual. Moreover, it will not be responsible for proposing a curriculum for the development of lay preaching since this project is solely concerned with the rationale for lay preaching. This writer's assumption is that in the attempt to effect lasting change in ministerial and local church practice, the reasons for the recovery of lay preaching should precede any how-to on the issue.

One problem anticipated when broaching the already sensitive subject of lay preaching is resistance on the part

of the clergy to grant (in the thinking of some pastors) "untrained laypeople" access to the pulpit. In discussing this project with colleagues, the writer finds understandable hesitation coming from some clergy in the form of uncertainty as to just what role he or she as a clergyperson will play in the local church if "all of the laypeople go to preaching too." However, the purpose of this project is not to displace the unique role that the pastor holds as leader of a congregation. Further, it is not the purpose of this project to relieve the ordained pastor-teacher of the responsibility of preaching. Great preaching is needed today, especially from the leadership of the church. If this rationale is to have any impact upon ministerial practice, it is believed that its acceptance will enhance the work of the pastor by helping him/her intensify the witness of the church by unleashing all of the now latent gifts present in the local church. Power and control issues left aside for the moment, one would have to agree that in the execution of Christian mission, it is generally better to have ten people working for and with a pastor, rather than allowing a pastor to do the work of ten people. By establishing a viable ministry of lay preaching, the paid clergy will only be freeing itself to spend more time in other equally valuable forms of ministry.

Procedure for Integration

In this project, the writer examines the biblical, theological, and historical foundations for the advocacy of

lay preaching. Careful study of relevant texts from the Bible and church history are combined in an attempt to integrate the twin disciplines of preaching/worship with church history. Library research in the areas of exegesis and the analysis of historical documents are the principal means of constructing this rationale for lay preaching. In Chapter 4 interviews are used whenever and wherever applicable.

Chapter Outlines

Chapter 2 of this project represents the biblical/historical component of the development of the thesis. This material is included in the project because it is foundational to that most basic understanding of how the practice of lay preaching has functioned in history. The controlling idea of Chapter 2 states: The practice of lay preaching is fully in harmony with both New Testament scripture and early Christian history. Chapter 2 is crucial to this project because provides grounding for the idea that laity ought to preach. The evidence for this position is revealed in the study of the Gospels and Acts. The relationship of Chapter 2 to Chapter 3 is to set the stage for an examination of the forces that led to the disappearance of lay preaching.

Chapter 3 analyzes the forces which collaborated in the disenabling of lay preaching as the Church became institutionalized in the third and fourth centuries. It discusses some of the critical elements leading to the

clericalization of preaching ministry. Chapter 3 is included because it shows that during the post-Apostolic period, the ministry of preaching became an officially clericalized activity. And the fact that today preaching remains principally an activity of clerics is a vestige of the pre-Reformation Church. Indeed, the fact that lay preaching has "never regained the recognized position that it had in the first century and a half"³⁹ intensifies the need for the recovery of lay preaching. The relationship of Chapter 3 to Chapter 4 is that Chapter 3 sets up the case for the modern Church to continue the Reformation (which as of now is incomplete) in terms of clergy-laity relationships. The guiding idea of Chapter 3 states: When the early Church became institutionalized, preaching--as a clericalized activity--became a means of reinforcing the hierarchical structures of the post-Apostolic Church.

Chapter 4 proceeds to propose theological, pedagogical, and structural strategies and/or changes necessary for the recovery of lay preaching in local churches. It is included to provide a perspective by which the professional leadership of the modern Church might undertake the training of lay persons for lay preaching ministry. The central idea of Chapter 4 is: Lay preaching can be recovered only through the active theological reeducation of both the

³⁹Thomas M. Lindsay, The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries (New York: George H. Doran, n.d.), 71.

clergy and laity, along with the implementation of an intentional program for the local church.

Chapter 5 presents the summary and conclusions of this project. In this chapter, this writer's reflections explore the next steps necessary in order for recovery of lay preaching to become an ordinary reality in the life of the local church. This chapter provides recommendations for the next steps in the lay preaching movement.

CHAPTER 2

A Biblical and Historical Foundation for Lay
Preaching in the Gospels and Acts

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the presentation of the ministry of the historical Jesus revealed in the Gospels and the book of Acts, in an attempt to analyze the origins of the first-century movement known as Christianity.

Jesus: The Founder a New Lay Movement

One of the most significant facts to emerge from a study of the Gospels is that Christianity at its inception began as a lay movement within Judaism.¹ A survey of the available evidence yielded by the Gospels substantiates this understanding. Matthew attributes the founding of the Christian Church to Jesus of Nazareth.² With the announcement of Mark, "the kingdom" is at hand,³ Jesus announced the purpose of his ministry--to call men and women to the kingdom consciousness which he bore in his own

¹For a further development of the notion of Christianity as a lay movement see George H. Williams, "The Ancient Church," in The Layman in Christian History: A Project of the Department of Laity of the World Council of Churches, eds. Stephen Charles Neill and Hans-Reudi Weber (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963), 28-56.

²Matt. 16:18.

³Mark 1:14.

person.⁴ Luke apparently recorded his first synagogue address in order to establish that, in his person, Jesus saw himself as the fulfillment of Messianic expectation.⁵ Evidently, from the Gospels it is clear that others heard and accepted the implications of the self-proclaimed mission of Jesus of Nazareth and were willing to follow him. These learners ($\mu\alpha\theta\eta\tau\alpha\iota$) were sufficiently impressed to leave their occupations and accept his invitation to discipleship.⁶ Subsequently, he organized, trained, and entrusted the Twelve with the task of discipling the world.⁷ This series of events suggests that the Jesus of the Gospels saw himself as the realization of Israel's prophetic expectations and the catalyst of a lay renewal movement within first-century Judaism.⁸

It is noteworthy that both Jesus and the disciples were laypersons, that is, they were not considered among the official religionists of their day.⁹ Though Jesus was frequently referred to as "teacher" or "rabbi," Hans Von Campenhausen, writing in his Ecclesiastical Authority and

⁴Mark 1:14-20.

⁵Luke 4:15.

⁶Luke 5:1-11, 27-31.

⁷Matt. 24:14; 28:18-20.

⁸George E. Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 137-44.

⁹John Telford, A History of Lay Preaching in the Christian Church (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1897), 15-21.

Spiritual Power, pointed out these titles did not grant to him membership in "a particular profession with established rights and well-founded authority."¹⁰ This awareness is critical for understanding the work and witness of Jesus.

Christianity originated as a lay movement within Judaism.

Based on the definitions of its own era, Christianity's founder, as well as its primary proponents were all laypersons.¹¹ They forwarded their new message through the medium of lay preaching, teaching, and service. Their principal forums originally were the synagogues which, according to Robert Worley, were "the most distinctive creations of the post-exilic period in Judaism"¹² because they were "directed and controlled by laymen [sic]."¹³

Consequently, because first-century believers were a distinct minority sect within Judaism, the involvement of every adherent was necessary. Thus, ministry was a collective lay endeavor, and the ordinary layperson viewed mission as his/her calling. At no point was the ministry of preaching defined as a clericalized activity, but its

¹⁰Hans Von Campenhausen, Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the First Three Centuries (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 4.

¹¹Robert Worley, Preaching and Teaching in the Earliest Church (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), 66-68.

¹²Ibid., 66.

¹³Ibid., 58.

mandate was from Jesus Christ; it belonged to all the people of God.¹⁴

In describing the various sects within first-century Judaism, Christopher Rowland pointed out in his Christian Origins that the Christian sect within first-century Judaism never lost sight of its Jewish heritage.¹⁵ In fact, the new movement was perfectly willing to affirm its historical dependence upon Judaism and to optimistically acknowledge that though cut off there was still hope for Israel.¹⁶ However, as a reflection of both "continuity and discontinuity"¹⁷ one may see that Jesus of Nazareth was openly committed to operating independently of Judaism and its institutions. Alexander Faivre observed in The Emergence of the Laity in the Early Church:

Jesus was also not either for or against the laity or clergy of his own time, just as he was not for one or other social class. He was critical of all attitudes and rejected all forms of human power that claimed to be absolute, whether they were based on wealth or whether they were cultic or simply intellectual in origin.¹⁸

¹⁴Matt. 28:18-20.

¹⁵Christopher Rowland, Christian Origins: From Messianic Movement to Christian Religion (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985), 76.

¹⁶Rom. 9-11.

¹⁷Frederick J. Cwiekowski, The Beginnings of the Church (New York: Paulist, 1988), 53.

¹⁸Alexander Faivre, The Emergence of the Laity in the Early Church, trans. David Smith (New York: Paulist, 1990), 4.

Jesus apparently offered to the religious of his era an alternative way of doing religion. He was quick to differentiate his interpretation of faith from that of the rabbinic Judaism.¹⁹ His new interpretation of the Torah was partly due to the fact that Jesus was founder and advocate of a millenarian movement.²⁰ Derek Tidball, a sociologist of the New Testament, commented upon this aspect of the Jesus movement in the first century:

In broad outline millenarian movements may be said to arise in situations of social unrest or where men are dissatisfied with their current social order. They promise the possibility of heaven on earth. . . . The movement is led by a prophet who articulates men's longings, lives himself according to the new system and is instrumental in bringing in a new creation.²¹

As a counter cultural prophet, Jesus' preaching espoused principles which directly contradicted the existing social situation of his times. He began his ministry by proclaiming good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoners, restoration of sight for the blind, and

¹⁹Von Campenhausen pointed out that "in the preaching of Jesus the whole legal system which had obtained hitherto is finished and done with; it has no further part to play." In Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power, 7.

²⁰"Millenarianism" is not to be confused with the millinenium of Rev. 20, which is a thousand years of promised peace, but rather millenarianism has to do with a movement's anticipation of God's dramatic restructuring of history. Millenarianism's fundamental understanding is that the present age will shortly give way to a new and better age. Thus, its orientation was apocalyptic.

²¹Derek Tidball, The Social Context of the New Testament: A Sociological Analysis (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 28.

liberation for the oppressed.²² Conversely, he pronounced woes upon the well fed, the contented and the well-regarded.²³ This stance toward the purpose of his ministry seems to have informed the way Jesus practiced his ministry of lay preaching.

An Analysis of the Lay Preaching of Jesus

Apparently, Jesus teaching and preaching turned popular value constructs on their heads.²⁴ For him, the first would be last, and the last would be first.²⁵ Out of respect for government he would pay taxes to Caesar,²⁶ but would not answer Pilate when interrogated.²⁷ Though claiming divine prerogatives,²⁸ he would throughout his public ministry be counted among the homeless.²⁹ He indicated that the entrance requirements of his kingdom, which by his own testimony were love mercy and faith, were superior to popular religious scrupulosity.³⁰

²²Luke 4:18.

²³Luke 4:18; 5:20-26.

²⁴Matt. 6:28-33.

²⁵Matt. 20:16; 23:10-12.

²⁶Mark 12:13.

²⁷Matt. 27:13-14.

²⁸John 8:58; cf. Exod. 3:14.

²⁹Matt. 8:20.

³⁰Matt. 23:23-24.

Further analysis of the preaching of Jesus reveals that his preaching embraced the major elements of soteriology, eschatology and pneumatology. In reference to soteriology (i.e., matters of salvation), Jesus believed that the rebirth of the individual was critical to entrance into the kingdom.³¹ The idea that persons could be born again was not new. In rabbinic Judaism the same notion existed.³² However, Jesus appears to supplement this idea of individual regeneration with a new element, namely "ek hudatos kai pneumatos," out of water and spirit. One may conclude that along with his obvious class concerns, the transformation of the individual was never far from the concern of Jesus.

Another striking element of the preaching of Jesus was his apparent emphasis upon eschatology (i.e., doctrine of the last things). Jesus clearly held that this age would give way to the age to come.³³ Though this fact is possibly surprising to some contemporary readers, that feature of the teaching of Jesus is not new. Much of the apocryphal intertestamental literature also asserted the ultimate destruction of history.³⁴ By dividing history

³¹John 3:1-8.

³²Robert Johnston, class lecture, "Backgrounds to the New Testament: Judaism," Andrews University, 18 October 1990.

³³Luke 20:34-35.

³⁴The Ethiopic Book of Enoch in The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, vol. 1, ed. James H. Charlesworth, trans. E. Isaac (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), 1.1.5-8. See also The Fourth Book of Ezra in The Old Testament Psuedepipigraha, vol. 1, ed. James H. Charlesworth, trans. B. M. Metzger

into epochs (i.e., the periodization of history), apocryphal writers anticipated the interruption of history through the direct intervention of God.³⁵ For them, the climax of the ages would be the dissolution of this evil age, which by definition stood irredeemable.³⁶ Out of that destruction the establishment of a new order would emerge. For the teachers of Jesus' era, Yahweh would commence a reign of righteousness.

Interestingly, while Jesus was in continuity with some of these beliefs, clearly he felt free to depart from many of them. For example, Jesus' preaching of the cataclysmic end of the evil age concurs with the assessment of the intertestamental apocalypticists.³⁷ However his preaching separates itself from the apocalypticists in at least two critical ways. First, for Jesus the end of the world appears to be messianically centered.³⁸ Unlike his predecessors, Jesus, in the Matthean account of his passion, believed and taught that Messiah would be the central actor in ushering in the last days.³⁹ Whereas intertestamental documents (such as the Syballine Oracles and 1 Enoch) held a

(Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), 7.50. Hereafter cited as 4 Ezra.

³⁵4 Ezra 7.26-34.

³⁶4 Ezra 5:7-27; 7:26-34.

³⁷Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21.

³⁸Matt. 24:14; John 14:1-3.

³⁹Matt. 26:64.

messiahless closure of the evil age,⁴⁰ Jesus held out for a final age in which Messiah would introduce the age to come with his own presence.⁴¹

Secondly, Jesus preaching differed from that of many of his contemporaries as to when the new age would commence and when the reign of God would arrive. Mark assigns to Jesus the announcement which ushered in his ministry, namely that with the appearance of Jesus the kingdom had come.⁴² While many were looking into the future, hoping for the kingdom to break into human history,⁴³ Mark wanted his readers to know that in Jesus Christ the kingdom had already come. C. H. Dodd commented upon this aspect of New Testament theology:

From these [Matt. 12:28; Acts 2:16; 2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 1:13; 2 Cor. 3:18; Titus 3:5; Heb. 6:5; 1 Pet. 1:23; 1 John 2:8] and many similar passages it is surely clear that, for the New Testament writers in general, the eschaton has entered history; the hidden rule of God has been revealed; the Age to Come has come.⁴⁴

Thus, to the degree that is was possible, the present evil age and the age to come would coexist in the Christian era. In this regard, the lay preaching of Jesus represented a

⁴⁰Sibylline Oracles in The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha vol. 1, ed. James H. Charlesworth, trans. J. J. Collins (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), 4.175-92; c.f. Ethiopic Book of Enoch, 91.15-17.

⁴¹Matt. 26:63-65.

⁴²Mark 1:14.

⁴³C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments (New York: Harper and Bros., 1964), 79-82.

⁴⁴Ibid., 85.

radically new understanding of eschatology. In fact, Jesus appears to have been so certain of this particular element in his preaching, that he could say--based on his followers' acceptance of his messiahship--that for them the promised, eternal life belonging to the eschaton had already begun.⁴⁵

A third vital element in the preaching of Jesus appears to have been his emphasis upon the Spirit.

Repeatedly, Jesus stressed the importance of the work of the Parakletos (comforter). To Jesus this comforter would, in the absence of Jesus, sustain his followers.⁴⁶ Indeed, the spirit would be the guarantor of Messiah's acceptance with God,⁴⁷ and this presence of the Spirit would serve as the unbroken link between the ministry of Jesus and that of his disciples.⁴⁸ Thus they were commanded by Jesus to wait for the fulfillment of the promise. That is, they were to continue the lay ministry of Jesus but only after they had received the enablement which actuated Jesus in his ministry of lay preaching.⁴⁹ Thus the book of Acts serves as a historical supplement to the Gospels, for Tidball pointed

⁴⁵John 17:2-3.

⁴⁶John 16:7.

⁴⁷Acts 2:33-34.

⁴⁸John 14:16. It should be noted that the construction is ἀλλον παράκλητον. The fact that *allon* is used (versus *ἕτερον*) could be translated "another of the same kind." This translation would express the continuity implied by the verse. See James M. Efird, A Grammar for New Testament Greek (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990), 162.

⁴⁹John 2:20; Luke 24:49.

out that "the religion of Jesus Christ was from its beginning a missionary religion" and not an "introversionist sect."⁵⁰

The Power of the Jesus Movement in Acts

Numerous reasons have been posited as to the motive of Luke for writing the book of Acts. A general overview of some of the proffered reasons yields varied perspectives. Ernst Haenchen believed that Acts is a response to the political tensions between the Roman government and Christianity.⁵¹ He held that Luke was attempting to make Christianity a state recognized religion because of the charges of subversion by its opponents. However, as William Willimon pointed out in his commentary Acts, it would be unimaginable that some Roman dignitary would comb through Acts in order to discover that Christianity should (on the basis of story, testimony, and the assertions regarding the messianic nature of Christ) be allowed to survive and further, be persuaded that Christianity was religio licita.⁵²

One writer suggests that Luke might have also been concerned to show to the upper classes that Christianity was in fact a harmless philosophy (possibly in an attempt to defend the incarcerated Paul against charges of subversion

⁵⁰Tidball, 63.

⁵¹Cited in William Willimon, Acts: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Atlanta: John Knox, 1988), 9.

⁵²Ibid.

by the Roman government), and that Christianity as an innocuous force should be considered religio licita.⁵³

It strikes this writer that Luke's purpose in his historical account is to emphasize the unity and trace the progress of the post-resurrection church. He opens Acts with the promise of power,⁵⁴ stresses the unity of the embryonic church,⁵⁵ graphically rehearses the consummation of the upper room promise,⁵⁶ and then proceeds to trace the dynamic progress of the newly empowered body throughout the rest of Acts. The picture of a triumphant church is very important to Luke and therefore is unapologetically presented to the reader. The unity of the ekklesia (church) and its power are the new movement's most commendable features.

Luke opens Acts on the antiphonal notes of promise and prophetic fulfillment.⁵⁷ Luke is clearly interested in demonstrating that the movement of God's actions in history have culminated in the appearance of Jesus Christ,⁵⁸ and at the same time (because of his victorious triumph over the

⁵³John Drane, "Simon the Samaritan and the Lucan Concept of Salvation History," Evangelical Quarterly 47, no. 3 (July 1975): 131.

⁵⁴Acts 1:8.

⁵⁵Acts 2:1.

⁵⁶Acts 1:4; 2:1-4.

⁵⁷Acts 2:27-28.

⁵⁸Acts 2:23-24.

powers of evil), the promised age of the Spirit has commenced.⁵⁹ It is because of the fulfillment of these promises that Luke in his gospel, through his recording of the parables, is able to affirm the certainty as well as the imminence of the parousia.⁶⁰ However, Luke understands that the time of waiting was to be a time of working,⁶¹ as the church anticipated the sure, but unknown time of the return of Christ.

The Spirit: Validation of Apostolic Lay Preaching

Luke's division of Acts is easily discernible. Chapter 1 serves as the introduction of the account (logos). In this chapter the writer sets out the primary historical and theological foundation upon which the rest of the book is further development. The resurrection and the ascension and the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, are critical to the themes of witness and community which are to follow. Then chapters 2 through 12 describe the movement of the Gospels among the Jews, with Peter emerging as the significant leader. The second half of the book traces the movement of the gospel beyond the Jews as it is carried to the Gentiles by the apostle Paul. The verses which form the raison d'etre for the propagation of the Gospel of Christ are verses 4 and 5. However, the preceding verses form the immediate context in

⁵⁹Acts 2:17-21.

⁶⁰Luke 12:35-48; 19:12-27.

⁶¹Acts 1:4.

which light is shed upon the promise of power for effective outreach.

In the Gospel, after having completed a faithful ministry to God the culmination of that ministry was the ascension. However, in the prologue of Acts, it strikes one that Luke the theologian is viewing that one event from dual perspectives. That is to say, the ascension viewed in one way was the consummation of the acceptably righteous life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Thus, it is the crescendo of that period of salvation history. On the other hand, the resurrection and the ascension also served as a transition to the new age, the age of the Church and the Spirit. Thus it is also important that the text Acts 1:4,5 be understood as the indicator--the transition to a new time in which the Spirit (in and through the Church) will prepare men and women for life in the authentic Messianic age.

Judaism held to a two-age theory: the present age of sin over against the age of righteousness.⁶² But, for this writer, Luke with his recapitulation of the Father's promise to pour out the Spirit "upon all flesh" reconstructs the Jewish concept of history by interjecting a new element, namely the age of the Spirit. For Luke this would also be the last age in which the validation of the Spirit would cut across all social and economic strata.⁶³ William Willimon

⁶²Abraham Terian, class lecture, "Baptism and the Lord's Supper," Andrews University, 8 February 1990.

⁶³Compare Joel 2:27-29 with Acts 2:27-28.

shares a helpful insight regarding the strategic significance of this issue of waiting by showing that, for the disciples, it was not only purposeful as a practice but also as a recognition of the new status assumed by their Lord. He summarized the work of the church in light of their Christ's ascension:

But their waiting is not empty-handed. They wait in hope, as those who know that their Master has been "taken up" (1:2) where he is "exalted at the right hand of God" (2:33). After the ascension, when Christians speak of God they must also speak of Christ, for Christ now reigns with God. The followers of Christ know that the one who served, taught, and loved them now rules for them. But this knowledge is no smug gnosis of the privileged few. It is a knowledge which demands a witness. . . . There is work to be done; let the church be about that work in the meantime, secure in the promise that Jesus who was so dramatically taken from his disciples shall return to them in the same way.⁶⁴

The Spirit: Empowerment for Witness--A Promise Fulfilled

Luke in Acts 1:12-26 makes clear that time of *περιμένειν* (waiting) was a strategic period for the disciples after their Lord's ascension. Being "of one accord and in one place," according to Luke, they were expectantly awaiting the fulfillment of the promise. Again the antiphonal themes of promise and fulfillment are crucial for the introduction of Acts, for it sets the stage for the validation of the Messianic claims of Jesus of Nazareth, and

⁶⁴Willimon, 20.

provides legitimization of the apostolic witness to the Christ. The promise-fulfillment motif in these first two chapters also signals the dawn of that new time, when access to the salvation offered and verified by Jesus would be universalized.⁶⁵ Because the promises made to Israel in the Old Testament have now been fulfilled in Christ, the offer of salvation made to the world has become accessible to all.

Roger Stronstad in his Charismatic Theology of St. Luke pointed out that the "inaugural gift of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost is a pivotal event in Luke's history of salvation theology."⁶⁶ This writer concurs with Stronstad, because even the most casual reading of Acts reveals that the presence of the Spirit made all the difference in the effectiveness of the preaching of the Apostles and in the vitality of the first church. Luke invoked numerous metaphors in order to iterate and reiterate the significance of the fulfillment of the promise. For Luke, the promise of the Spirit was nuanced in multiple ways. Sometimes it was described as a "filling."⁶⁷ Sometimes it was called an "empowering."⁶⁸ At one time Luke called it a "clothing,"⁶⁹

⁶⁵Acts 2:37-39.

⁶⁶Roger Stronstad, Charismatic Theology of St. Luke (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishing, 1984), 49.

⁶⁷Acts 2:7.

⁶⁸Acts 1:8.

⁶⁹Luke 24:9.

and in still another instance it was a "baptism."⁷⁰ Interestingly, each of these metaphors discloses something of the manner of the fulfillment of the promise, but none of them exhaust it completely. Nevertheless, there is one thread of commonality which ties these images together: the experience of being filled, or baptized, or clothed, for Luke always indicates an experience in which the lay preachers and teachers were the receiving agents of something external to human reality. Consequently, on the day when the promise was fulfilled, it was fulfilled with dramatic impact and the Church was born. Although this writer does not agree with every aspect of Willimon's understanding of the use of story in Luke, Willimon offers this insightful clue to the Lucan approach to truth-telling:

More than one interpretation can be offered for what happened in the upper room at Pentecost. No single formulation can do it justice. We are listening to the account of something strange, beyond the bounds of imagination, miraculous, inscrutable, an origin which as far as Luke is concerned, was the only way one could "explain" the existence of the church. No flat, prosaic explanation can do justice to the truth of how the church came into being and how the once timid disciples found their tongues to proclaim the truth of Christ.⁷¹

Though one must agree that something out of the ordinary is indeed happening in Acts 2, to essentially

⁷⁰Acts 1:4.

⁷¹Willimon, 29.

reduce it to myth as Willimon does can only be interpreted as an attempt to account for the supernatural elements of the Lucan narrative. This reading behind the narrative is at best speculative in spite of the agreement of people like J. H. E. Hull, who finds what Luke describes to be logically impossible.⁷² However, for Luke the following happened: sounds of rushing winds, the appearance of non-consuming, fiery self-dividing tongues of fire, and previously unlearned languages being spoken.⁷³ As a result, the behavior of the disciples (whether sincerely misunderstood or cynically represented) was identified with drunkenness.⁷⁴ But on the contrary, they had realized the fulfillment of the promise of the Father. In Luke's recital of this climactic day in the history of the church there is no ambiguity. It was the reception of the Spirit which set lay proclamation in motion.⁷⁵

The fulfillment of the promise in Acts falls to isolated individuals as well as to group situations. The expression "filled with the Holy Spirit" occurs six times in the book of Acts. Three times it fell upon isolated

⁷²J. H. E. Hull, The Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1968), 58-59.

⁷³Acts 2:4.

⁷⁴Acts 2:15.

⁷⁵Acts 2:14-21.

individuals.⁷⁶ Three other times it was fulfilled in a group situation.⁷⁷

The Inclusivity of the Early Church

Another aspect of the appeal of the Early church was its obvious social- and class-inclusivity.⁷⁸ It included "tax collectors, prostitutes, and sinners."⁷⁹ Moreover, these, along with others from the upper as well as the working-class,⁸⁰ acted as the proponents of this new message of the Messiah.⁸¹ Repeatedly they were looked upon as the bearers of a special message.⁸² Messiah's work became their work. Criticized as lay persons, considered both "unschooled" and "ordinary,"⁸³ the apostles were the chief proponents of a message to all classes. Their work preaching was to cut across all barriers. Whether rich or poor, free or bond, male or female, all were to find a new identity in the confession of a radically new message. The apostles apparently did not have the advantage

⁷⁶Acts 4:8; 9:17; 13:9.

⁷⁷Acts 2:4; 4:31; 13:52.

⁷⁸Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, In Memory of Her (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 121.

⁷⁹Luke 15:1-2; Mark 16:1.

⁸⁰Abraham J. Malherbe, Social Aspects of Early Christianity (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 29-33.

⁸¹Green, 172-75.

⁸²Acts 2.

⁸³Acts 4:13.

(disadvantage?) of formal Jewish theological training.⁸⁴

Yet, Justin Martyr wrote in his Apology:

From Jerusalem there went out twelve men into the world, though they were unlearned and had no ability in speaking; yet by the power of God they proclaimed to every race of men that they were sent by Christ to teach the word of God.⁸⁵

The particulars of how and when and under what circumstances the Apostles did their work outside Jerusalem is not exhaustively treated in the few extant documents left to the modern church. Von Campenhausen argues for a critical distinction between the person and work of Jesus, and the person and work of the Apostles. For the former, the authority was self-contained; for the latter, their authority was in Jesus' name. These early workers were the vessels of the Spirit.⁸⁶ Their preaching's impact, their power, and their authority were only the fulfillment of the earlier promise made by Christ (Acts 1:4).⁸⁷ Therefore, it

⁸⁴Green comments that "the very disciples themselves were significantly, laymen, devoid of formal theological or rhetorical training." See Evangelism in the Early Church, 172.

⁸⁵Justin, Apology, with a foreword by Basil L. Gildersleeve (New York: American Book Co., 1904), 1.39.9.

⁸⁶A very enlightening elaboration of the place of spirit in the world of the New Testament can be found in David E. Aune, Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 195-97. Aune in this section of his work raises the question of who prophesied in early Christianity. He also documents the variety of persons who, in addition to the original apostles, were endowed with charismatic gifts in the early church.

⁸⁷Von Campenhausen, 25-27.

should not be surprising that a special place of ministry was occupied by women, since authority was found in "the Spirit" as opposed to institutional office.

The Inclusion of Women Preachers and Teachers

The prerogatives of the Spirit provided the inclusive freedom which allowed the Apostolic Church to incorporate men and women into the work of outreach in the early church. According to Sandra Schnieders in Preaching and the Non-Ordained:

The early Church had a profound sense of the liberty of the Holy Spirit to do new things. The Spirit inspired the admission of the Gentiles to the faith without their submission to the Law of Moses (Acts 11:1-18). The Spirit called a ferocious persecutor of the Church to become a vessel of election for the preaching of the gospel (Acts 9:1-19). And the Spirit called women as well as men to exercise various ministries in the Church. . . . The guiding principle was that the action of the Spirit was free and sovereign and that the Spirit was not to be quenched, but that everything, especially the exercise of prophecy, was to be tested so that the good might be cherished (1 Thess. 5:19) [emphasis added].⁸⁸

Many writers have attempted to locate woman's contribution to the early movement. They raise questions concerning why Jesus did not appoint any women among the Twelve. In what the writer considers an incisive response to this question, Evelyn and Frank Stagg in Woman in the World of Jesus, lodge

⁸⁸Sandra Schnieders, "New Testament Foundations for Preaching by the Non-Ordained," Preaching and the Non-Ordained: An Interdisciplinary Study, ed. Nadine Foley (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1983), 55.

a cogent argument against the ipso facto argument of those who protest against woman's inclusion in preaching ministry based on what Jesus did not do versus what Jesus did:

Jesus advanced various principles that went far beyond their immediate implementation. For example, he clearly repudiated the Jew-Samaritan antipathy, affirming not only his own Jewish kin, but also the Samaritan. Even so, there are no Samaritans among the Twelve. Hence, no more may be read into Jesus not having included women in the Twelve than in his not having included Samaritans in the Twelve.⁸⁹

In his teaching, Jesus appears to be far ahead of the cultural mores of his day. Whereas, in the broader culture woman's work was to bake bread, wash garments, cook food, nurse children, and make ready her husband's bed,⁹⁰ it was Jesus who in the Lukian narrative affirmed woman's right to study⁹¹ at a time when even conversation with woman was

⁸⁹Evelyn Stagg and Frank Stagg, Woman in the World of Jesus (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 123-24.

⁹⁰Mishnah, trans. Herbert Danby (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), 252.

⁹¹Luke 10:41-42. Stagg and Stagg note that "Mary's choice was not a conventional one for Jewish Women. She sat at the feet of Jesus and was listening to 'his word.' Both the posture and the reference to Jesus' 'word' seem to imply teaching, religious instruction. Jewish women were not permitted to touch the Scriptures; and they were not taught the Torah itself, although they were instructed in accordance with it for the proper regulation of their lives. A rabbi did not instruct a woman in the Torah. Not only did Mary choose the good part, but Jesus related to her in a teacher-disciple relationship" [emphasis added]. See Woman in the World of Jesus, 118.

discouraged.⁹² It should be noted that this affirmation was rendered by Jesus at a time when no provision was made for the education of women.⁹³

In the matter of lay preaching and teaching, Michael Green's assertion that "there was no distinction between the sexes in the matter"⁹⁴ appears to stand the scrutiny of the New Testament. Clearly, there were many women who ministered with Jesus. A list of the many significant female contributors to the origins and growth of Christianity must include such notables as: the two Marys;⁹⁵ Tabitha, (who was identified as a *μαθήτρια*, a "disciple"⁹⁶); Priscilla (who along with her husband instructed Apollos⁹⁷); Tryphaena;⁹⁸ Mary, the mother of John Mark;⁹⁹ Phoebe;¹⁰⁰ and Junias (whom Paul identified as

⁹²Leonard Swidler, Women in Judaism: The Status of Women in Formative Judaism (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1976), 123-24.

⁹³Donald E. Gowan, Bridge Between the Testaments: A Reappraisal of Judaism from the Exile to the Birth of Christianity (Allison Park, Pa.: Pickwick Publications, 1986), 236.

⁹⁴Green, 175.

⁹⁵Mark 16:1.

⁹⁶Acts 9:36.

⁹⁷Acts 18:24-19:1.

⁹⁸Rom. 16:12.

⁹⁹Acts 12:12.

¹⁰⁰Rom. 16:1.

an apostle).¹⁰¹ One would probably not be going beyond the evidence of history to further assert that in the New Testament, trace examples of women functioning in the ministries of teaching,¹⁰² apostleship¹⁰³ and prophecy¹⁰⁴ are present. And all of these were done without the need for a special ordination. Alexander Faivre noted in his The Emergence of the Laity in the Early Church that

[a]lthough the ministry occasionally gave rise to special honor and consideration, it was possible for all ordinary Christians to become ministers and nothing implies that it was necessary to be set apart.¹⁰⁵

Women then appear to serve as examples of status-free functioning in the early church. They apparently labored shoulder-to-shoulder with their male counterparts. Though one must read the early records carefully, clearly women played pivotal roles in the propagation of the Christian faith in the early centuries.¹⁰⁶ In fact, if the criteria for apostleship involves (1) having seen the Risen Christ,¹⁰⁷ (2) personal reception of a commission to

¹⁰¹Rom. 16:7.

¹⁰²Acts 19:26.

¹⁰³Acts 21:9.

¹⁰⁴Rom. 16:7.

¹⁰⁵Faivre, 12.

¹⁰⁶Fiorenza, 161-75.

¹⁰⁷1 Cor. 15:3-9.

ministry from the risen Christ,¹⁰⁸ and (3) having accompanied Jesus through his historical ministry,¹⁰⁹ then certain of the aforementioned women would be examples of the critical role played by women in the early church. Stagg and Stagg are correct when they write that

[t]he thrust [of Jesus' outreach] was outward, increasingly inclusive and not restrictive. Even in the early stages of his mission, women were becoming deeply involved at the power center of the Jesus movement.¹¹⁰

Another consideration which contributes to the fact of woman's central functioning in the early Christian movement is the dynamic applicability of the ordination concept. Unlike today, when the concept of ordination is pregnant with technical, theological significance, the New Testament concept of ordination appears to carry a remarkable fluidity. A brief survey of the New Testament reveals at least eight different Greek root words which can be translated for the one English cognate "ordain." They are διατασσω (to arrange),¹¹¹ κατασκευάζω (to prepare),¹¹² κρίνω (to decide),¹¹³ ὁρίζω (to ordain),¹¹⁴ προορίζω (to mark

¹⁰⁸Gal. 1:11-17.

¹⁰⁹Acts 1:21-22.

¹¹⁰Stagg and Stagg, 124.

¹¹¹1 Cor. 7:17; Gal. 3:19.

¹¹²Heb. 9:16.

¹¹³Acts 16:4.

¹¹⁴Acts 10:42.

before),¹¹⁵ ποιέω (to do or to make),¹¹⁶ καθιστημι (to place),¹¹⁷ and ἴτιθημι (to place or to put).¹¹⁸

What is striking is that ordination as an institutional practice, especially ex opere operata, does not exist in the New Testament. This must be a factor in any discussion of whether the women who ministered with Jesus were ordained. The answer to that question is that they were not appointed among Luke's Twelve because that number expresses the continuity of the Church with Israel's twelve patriarchs. This fact has been widely documented. Ladd has pointed out that "Jesus' call of the twelve disciples to share his mission has been widely recognized as a symbolic act setting forth the continuity between his disciples and Israel."¹¹⁹ However, in the larger ministry of Jesus women were called, commissioned, empowered, and dispatched to the same degree that men were. Women were also the recipients of the Spirit on Pentecost.¹²⁰ Their missionary role in the original expansion of the Church is without question a central one.

Whether or not women preached is an interesting question. An affirmative answer appears to be found in

¹¹⁵1 Cor. 2:7.

¹¹⁶Mark 3:14.

¹¹⁷Titus 1:5.

¹¹⁸John 15:16; 1 Tim. 2:7.

¹¹⁹Ladd, 109.

¹²⁰Acts 1:13-14; 2:1-4.

Luke's observation that the four daughters of Phillip prophesied.¹²¹ According to Elisabeth Tetlow's Women and Ministry in the New Testament, "prophecy in the early church was a [public] ministry of the word of proclamation for the building up of the community."¹²² C. H. Dodd noted that the core kerygmatic content of apostolic preaching consisted of the proclamation of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.¹²³ If Dodd is correct, then women disciples would, of necessity, be considered the first preachers of the resurrection.¹²⁴

Finally, Green seems to have caught the picture of women's ministry during the apostolic and post-apostolic age, when he writes that

[t]he New Testament tells us of women laboring in evangelism, acting as hostesses to the Church in their houses, prophesying, and speaking in tongues, and acting as deaconesses. The prominence of women continued, as we have seen, in the second century. Sometimes it would be exercised through public speaking, sometimes through martyrdom. The preaching of Maximilla, a Thelca, or the four daughters of Phillip had a power which was not to be denied.¹²⁵

¹²¹Acts 21:9.

¹²²Elisabeth M. Tetlow, Women and Ministry in the New Testament (New York: Paulist, 1980), 122.

¹²³Dodd, 10-12.

¹²⁴Mark 16:1-8.

¹²⁵Green, 176.

Lay Preaching in the Post-Apostolic Age

With the close of the apostolic era one finds that the Christian message continued in its progress through the work of wandering preachers and teachers. Von Campenhausen contended that "the first missionaries were not seeking to 'found churches' but to proclaim Christ"¹²⁶ in their preaching and teaching. In the Didache, one of the oldest surviving documents of the early church, one reads how these roving lay preachers were to be received.¹²⁷ These itinerant missionaries were to be received as if receiving the Christ. However, if they stayed more than two days, or asked for money for themselves, they were to be judged as false prophets.¹²⁸ What is valuable about the Didache is that it is obviously referring to a time prior to the establishment of apostolic office because it presupposes the transient nature of the pastoral/evangelistic teacher. This transience of the early lay preachers and teachers explains why the New Testament's warnings regarding false teachers are so vigorous.¹²⁹

Origen, in his diatribe Against Celsus, shed further light on the vocation of these Christian preachers who dedicated themselves to the advancement of the gospel:

¹²⁶Von Campenhausen, 55.

¹²⁷Didache, in The Apostolic Fathers, trans. J. B. Lightfoot (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1956), 11.

¹²⁸Ibid.

¹²⁹See 1 Cor. 11:5, 13; Titus 3:9, 10; and Jude 4.

Christians do all in their power to spread the faith all over the world. Some of them make it the business of their life to wander not only from city to city but from township to township and village to village in order to gain fresh converts for the Lord.¹³⁰

Eusebius, in describing the work of the church in the second century of the Christian age, noted the continuance of this practice:

There were still many evangelists of the Word eager to use their inspired zeal of the example of the apostles for the increase and building up of the divine word.¹³¹

The second century of the Christian era was one of continued growth through the continuing ministry of the followers of Jesus. Where local churches were established, the local leadership of the church was expected to maintain the tradition of lay preaching. It should be noted that preaching ministry in the church was not exclusively confined to a clergy class, but was extended to those qualified on spiritual grounds. Socio-economic status or educational attainment were not factors.¹³²

Summary

Christianity began as a lay preaching movement within Judaism. Its founder, as well as its primary proponents,

¹³⁰Origen, Contra Celsum [Against Celsus], trans. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge, England: University Press, 1889), 3.9.

¹³¹Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, trans. C. F. Cruse (London: Sam Bagster and Sons, 1867), 5.10.2.

¹³²Tidball, 84.

forwarded the new message by the vehicle of preaching. Because they were a distinct minority sect within Judaism, the support of every adherent was necessary. Thus ministry was a shared enterprise and the ordinary lay people saw mission as their Christian vocation. At no point was ministry (and particularly preaching) a clericalized activity, but its mandate was from Jesus Christ and it belonged to all the people of God. This reality apparently imparted vigor to the Church and was principally responsible for the rapid spread of Christianity into the world.

The next chapter of this project describes some of the processes by which the Church became divided into clergy and laity, and how that dichotomy impacted upon the ministry of the church in general and upon lay preaching specifically. Some of the forces through which preaching became a clericalized activity in the post-apostolic Church are examined.

CHAPTER 3

Factors in the Clericalization of Preaching
in the Post-Apostolic Age

The question of whether or not a strict definition of lay person can be applied to any ecclesiological discussion prior to the fourth century is a very complex one. On the one hand, to simply reduce the discussion to an either/or set of alternatives does not do justice to the subtleties behind the development of the pastoral office. On the other, to fail to note how quickly ministry shifted from a communal/collegial reality to a specialized concept is to miss a factor of critical importance. This chapter first examines selected elements of the New Testament concept of ministry, and then analyzes how that concept of ministry grew to be identified with a special segment of the Church, namely the clergy. Unfortunately, the clergy of this post-apostolic church period utilized preaching as a means of legitimizing a new ecclesiastical arrangement. Finally, the impact of the institutionalization of the Church upon the activity of lay preaching is discussed.

The Concept of Ministry in the New Testament

A foundational passage for understanding the nature of the Church is found in 1 Pet. 2:9:

You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare

the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

This description of Christian believers found in Peter echoes Exod. 19:4-5. In this New Testament passage, the titles formerly bestowed upon the Old Testament people of God are used to express the new self-understanding of the New Testament Church. Clearly, in the thinking of the writer of this epistle, Christian believers were God's new priesthood, for Peter used the second person plural pronoun ('*Ὑμεῖς*) to direct his address to the entire community of believers. Collectively, they were a gifted and empowered people, with a specific, priestly function to execute in the world.¹ The work of the priesthood belonged to all of the new disciples who were scattered into the world through persecution.² The Church was the *λαός*, the people of God.³ Its ministry of mutuality, which provided a basis of witness to the world. Accordingly, the New Testament used no one specific terminology for ministry, as a designated class of persons occupying particular offices. Ministry was a sacrificial service performed by the *ἐκκλησία* (the gathered community) on behalf of the world. It was modeled after Christ's ministry in that its purpose was redemptive.⁴ Functions, not status or ministerial offices, appear to be

¹Rom. 12:1-3.

²1 Pet. 1:1-2.

³1 Pet. 2:9.

⁴John 10:14-18.

the central emphases of New Testament writers who took up the subject.⁵ Indeed, no form of class identification was intended by the term. However, servant-leadership (as opposed to clergy-lordship) did exist in the early church. Thus, it is helpful to survey the pattern(s) of leadership evidenced in the New Testament and to reflect upon relevant implications for the contemporary Church.

Leadership and Service Functions in the Early Church

According to Eph. 4:11-12 God called some to be "apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers." Michael Green felt that this represented the "first level" of early church leadership.⁶ However, rather than see in this passage a hierarchical structure, one may see a collegial leadership expressed, particularly in Acts 15. Also, in Titus 1:5-7, another expression of leadership appears in the form of bishops and elders. Both *επίσκοπον* and *πρεσβυτέρον* (respectively) are used interchangeably in the same context which may imply that, at this stage in the development of the leadership, these two were one. The distinction between apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor-teachers and bishops or elders may have resided in whether they were fixed or itinerant, and in whether they were charismatic or not. But, clearly, Luke shows them working together in the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15.

⁵1 Cor. 12; 1 Pet. 4.

⁶Green, 168.

When one turns to 1 Cor. 12:28, other categories of ministries are enumerated along with the apostles and prophets and teachers, miracle workers, helpers and administrators, and tongues speakers. The word generally translated "ministry" is diakonia and it is used in 2 Cor. 11:23 in reference to "ministers of Christ" and in Col. 1:25 as "ministers of the church." Strikingly, some of the epistles are addressed to the churches in generalized terms: to the saints;⁷ or to the dispersed.⁸ At bottom, this implies that in these churches no single authoritative individual leader was acknowledged. It appears that any very strict organization of local churches would be a later development but, during much of the era of the New Testament, believers assembled in houses and whoever was the local host or hostess presumably acted as the worship leader.⁹

These house churches apparently were outgrowths of the ministries of the Twelve and the rest of those who worked and witnessed under the tutelage of Jesus. The Twelve, as well as the Seventy¹⁰ who were invited to participate with Jesus in mission, apparently were modeled after the

⁷Eph. 1:1-2.

⁸1 Pet. 1:1-2.

⁹See Acts 2:46 and Rom. 16:5, 11, where various house churches and their hosts are mentioned.

¹⁰Luke 10:1, 17. Some manuscripts show seventy-two as the number appointed and dispatched by Jesus. See the note to Luke 10:1 in the apparatus of the New International Version.

ambassadors of rabbinic Judaism described by Jesus in Matt. 23:15. These Pharisaic ambassadors were sent forth during the diaspora on missions of proselytization.¹¹

The house churches apparently provided a conducive climate in which leadership could be developed after the apostles moved off of the scene. According to Floyd Filson's "The Significance of the Early House Churches," the house church advances our understanding of the early Church in at least five ways:

1. House churches made possible a genuinely "Christian" approach to worship and fellowship.
2. The house churches explain the "great attention paid to family life in the letters of Paul and in other Christian writings."
3. The fact of "the existence of several house churches in one city goes far to explain the tendency to party strife in the apostolic age."
4. A study of the house church "also throws light upon the social status of early Christians. . . . The apostolic church was more nearly a cross section of society than we have sometimes thought."
5. Most importantly for the purposes of this paper, [t]he house church was the training ground for the Christian leaders who were to build the church after the loss of 'apostolic' guidance, and everything in such a situation favored the emergence of the host as the most prominent and influential member of the group. The strong

¹¹Johnston, 19 October 1990.

leader of one such group might assume leadership throughout a city or section, although, as 3 John may suggest, such a development would not as a rule be free from friction.¹²

Green considered the lay preaching and teaching conducted in the house church to be one of the most important means available to spread the gospel.¹³ In the book of Acts, one reads of believers' homes having been used for prayer services,¹⁴ for Eucharistic celebrations,¹⁵ evangelistic gatherings,¹⁶ and all-night prayer and study meetings as well as for "seekers" follow-up.¹⁷

From a reading of Acts 15, the Twelve apparently were the principal leaders of the new movement. Thus the apostle Paul--when delineating the leadership responsibilities of the Christian community--pointed out that first there were apostles, secondly there were prophets, and thirdly teachers¹⁸. This passage may be a chronological delineation of the emergence of these three groups within the New Testament Church. It should not be overlooked that in the passages relating to these functions, the common

¹²Floyd Filson, "The Significance of the Early House Churches," Journal of Biblical Literature 58 (1939): 109-12.

¹³Green, 207.

¹⁴Acts 12:12.

¹⁵Acts 2:44-46.

¹⁶Acts 10:22.

¹⁷Acts 5:42.

¹⁸1 Cor. 12:28.

denominator of itinerancy appears to connect them. Not only were these leaders gifted in the area of word-oriented preaching, teaching, and evangelizing but, as opposed to indigenous leadership, theirs was a ministry which required them to travel from place to place. Their obvious spiritual gifts were either self-validating (with the Spirit giving witness¹⁹), or self-denying. But whatever circumstance applied, any person claiming charismatic authority was subject to the scrutiny of the receiving community.

The work of the prophets in the New Testament is not nearly as discernible as the work of the apostles.

Christian prophets are mentioned in Acts 11:27, 15:32 and Rom. 12:6-9. The New Testament also knows Christian prophetesses in the persons of the daughters of Phillip (Acts 21:19). Clearly, like Agabus they prophesied events that had a bearing on the future (Acts 11:27-30) and the impact that those events would have on the Church. Carl Volz suggests that the content of prophecy included another element which would be vital to the success of the Church:

The content of prophecy was insight into the relationship between God and humanity. In addition to the gift of proclaiming God's word, the prophet played a special role in church discipline and in reconciling penitents.²⁰

¹⁹1 John 4:13-16.

²⁰Carl Volz, Pastoral Life and Practice in the Early Church (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990), 16.

Unfortunately, for moderns, prophecy appears to have died out as the Church moved through the centuries.²¹ For the most part, by today's standards, it would be difficult to imagine what life in a local congregation would be like with a resident prophet.

According to Paul, teachers formed another important class of leaders. Teachers are presented as instructors of the faith to neophytes.²² Their responsibilities seem to overlap with those of prophets and pastors. In Ephesians, teachers appear within the enumeration of the callings of apostles, prophets, evangelists, and some pastor-teachers. The connective conjunction *kai* between the words pastor and teachers is an epexegetical conjunction, thus indicating that the two are not separate callings, but are actually two facets of one pastoral function.²³

Along with apostles, prophets and teachers, a second group of leaders which appear to have localized functions in the New Testament is that of bishops, presbyters, and

²¹1 Cor. 13:8.

²²Acts 18:24-28.

²³This use of the epexegetical *kai* is described by Granville Sharp and cited in H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament (Toronto: Macmillan, 1957), 147. It is explained as follows: "When the copulative *kai* connects two nouns of the same case, if the article 'ò' or any of its cases precedes the first of the said nouns or participles, and is not repeated before the second noun or participle, the latter always relates to the same person that is expressed or described by the first noun or participle; i.e., it denotes a farther [sic] description of the first-named person." Such is the case in the aforementioned passage.

deacons. The bishop in Titus 1:5 is often translated "overseer." The primary responsibility of the bishop was to oversee the Church of God (Acts 20:28). The social origins of the functions of overseers is not completely clear, but Volz noted that the term was lifted from the social world of Hellenism and baptized with Christian meaning.²⁴

Elders are mentioned numerous times in the New Testament.²⁵ This appears to be an official designation imported from Judaism into the vocabulary of the early church. It is widely known that the Sanhedrin was occupied by the elders.²⁶ In the Christian Church they first appear in the famine relief narrative of Acts 11:30. The gift collected was received by the elders. The elders are also mentioned in Timothy and Titus, thus indicating that these functions were significant enough to also have spread beyond Jerusalem to the Greek Christian churches. Lastly, the elders are presented as sitting in equal authority with the Twelve at the Jerusalem Council.²⁷

The deacons seem to be the best known of this local leadership group. They were chosen in response to the inter-ethnic squabbling between the Hebrews and the Greeks (Acts 6). These διάκονοι (deacons) were selected in order

²⁴Ibid., 17.

²⁵Matt. 15:2; Mark 7:3, 5; Acts 11:30, 14:23, 15:4; Titus 1:5; 1 Pet. 5:1.

²⁶Gowan, 141, 202, 227.

²⁷Acts 15:4, 23.

to free the apostles for the ministries of the word and prayer. Their qualifications were the holding of a positive reputation and a spiritually committed life.²⁸ These deacons apparently were gifted preachers, teachers and charismatics. Luke's witness regarding Stephen was that as a deacon he did great signs and wonders.²⁹ Further witness concerning Philip was that he taught an Ethiopian eunuch, and was in direct contact with the Spirit.³⁰ After instructing the eunuch Philip baptized him. Thus deacons, by referent as well as official authority, assumed leadership with the Twelve.

What may we conclude from this cursory review of the leadership structure of the Church of the New Testament? Namely, that for the first and into the second century there appears to have been a sense of shared leadership among the disciples, the local leadership, and the people at large. It should be noted that when Matthias was chosen as a replacement for Judas, the voice of the then-regarded church's prayers were sought along with those of the Apostles.³¹ This type of councillor-collegial leadership (e.g., Acts 15) would continue through the next two centuries. However from approximately A.D. 200 to 400, a

²⁸Acts 6:1-6.

²⁹Acts 6:8.

³⁰Acts 8:27-31.

³¹Acts 1:21-26.

gradual centralization of power eventually eroded the collegiality of the early church and the prerogatives of laity.

The Rise of Clergy Over Laity

In the years after the deaths of the apostles, a gradual shift in power occurred in the Christian Church. From its virtual cultist beginnings, the religion of Jesus began growing at an astounding rate; it eventually became the official religion of the empire.³² As Christianity entered new territories the need for leadership was keenly felt. The precise manner as to how that leadership grew to exercise ecclesiastical control over the Church is quite revealing.

The Didache, after offering counsel regarding the conditions under which a wandering prophet should be received, offered some rather straightforward counsel regarding the establishment of local church leadership:

Appoint for yourselves therefore bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are meek and not lovers of money, and true and approved; for unto you they also perform the service of the prophets and teachers.³³

It is readily evident that according to this instruction the laity held determinative input regarding the appointment of local leadership. Both the bishops and the deacons were to be elected by the people. But,

³²Walker, 105-6.

³³Didache 15.

surprisingly, true prophets were represented as the "chief priests."³⁴ This allusion may be one of the first indicators as to an ambivalence in the self-understanding of the early church. The application of cultic, Old Testament imagery to the new Church would in later centuries be the basis for justification of a rigidly, hierarchical form of church government. Tetlow observed that

[b]y the end of the first century, the pastoral epistles seem to indicate that the ministry of preaching and teaching was in the process of being absorbed by the office of presbyter [1 Tim. 5:17].³⁵

Tetlow also indicates that, because in subsequent centuries pastoral offices would be reinterpreted through the Old Testament model of the Levitical Priesthood, women (as laypersons) would be excluded from the ministry of preaching.³⁶

Ignatius' epistles appear to render strong support to the emerging offices of bishop, presbyter and deacon. He requested that the Ephesians be "in harmony with the mind of the bishop."³⁷ He saw the bishop as one "presiding after the likeness of God, and the presbyters after the likeness

³⁴Didache 13.

³⁵Tetlow, 127.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ignatius, To the Ephesians, in The Apostolic Fathers, trans. J. B. Lightfoot (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1956), 4.

of the council of the Apostles."³⁸ Believers were to "respect the deacons as Jesus Christ" and respect the bishop "as being a type of the Father."³⁹ Apparently, for Ignatius, heavenly types as patterns for the structuring of Church offices is what gives them (i.e., church offices) their legitimacy. However, because at this time the Church was not a consolidated institutional entity, Ignatius makes no appeal to institutional authority in support of his leadership, nor does he put forward a doctrine of apostolic succession. Rather, his approaching martyrdom apparently legitimizes his appeals to the churches.⁴⁰

Clement of Rome (ca. A.D. 95-100) appears to be the first patristic writer to officially demarcate between the cleros and the laos. In his Epistle to the Corinthians a clearly negative connotation of the term "layman" appears. Clement rebuked the Corinthians for dismissing from office presbyters who (in his estimation) had served acceptably.⁴¹ In an attempt to encourage submissiveness to the local

³⁸Ignatius, To the Magnesians, in The Apostolic Fathers, trans. J. B. Lightfoot (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1956), 7.

³⁹Ignatius, To the Trallians, in The Apostolic Fathers, trans. J. B. Lightfoot (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1956), 3.

⁴⁰Ignatius, To the Romans, in The Apostolic Fathers, trans. J. B. Lightfoot (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1956), 4-6.

⁴¹Clement, The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, ed. W. K. Lowther Clarke (New York: Macmillan, 1937), 44.

bishop, he invoked the analogy of the Levitical priesthood to justify orderliness among the laity.⁴² By insisting that the "layman is bound by lay ordinances,"⁴³ Clement differentiated the various levels of rank within the Church. For him, the laity is to fulfill its calling by passively submitting to Church leadership.⁴⁴ In fact, he used a military metaphor to emphasize that "each man in his own rank executeth the orders given by the king."⁴⁵ The significance of these descriptions and exhortations is that they signaled a radically new way of compartmentalizing the people of God. Authoritarian, command power was the right of leadership. Obedience was the duty of church lay persons. And the arena in which this new ideology was to be enacted was in worship. Liturgical functions were to be carried out by the clergy.⁴⁶ Faivre sheds light upon the impact of this new stratification of the clergy and the laity:

In Clement's first use of the Greek word laikos, then, the "layman" becomes in translation "the plebian man"--in other words, the man who forms part of the plebs, the vulgar or popular section of

⁴²1 Clement 40.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴1 Clement 37.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶1 Clement 40.

the people, and was not one of the patricii or privileged class.⁴⁷

The groundwork for a significant cleavage between churchly classes was laid by Clement. This cleavage was evident to Emil Brunner, who even detected a level of authoritarianism in the way Clement so much as called the Church to order. Brunner pointed out:

The way in which Clement calls the Corinthian church to order can hardly be distinguished from the way in which Paul exhorted the Corinthians to respect the tried and tested overseer [1 Cor. 16:16]--and yet a world of difference lies between the two. Paul refers to the self-authentication of those leading men through their service and urges the community not to deny recognition to those who have proved themselves. Clement on the other hand refers to the legal right which has been secured by installation in the office [emphasis added].⁴⁸

Interestingly, both Ignatius⁴⁹ and Clement⁵⁰ organize the self-identity of the Church around an official ministry. This restructuring of the life of the Church was predicated upon a dichotomy between the clergy and the laity. This phenomenon is what can be identified as the beginnings of the clericalization of the Church. It is not until the

⁴⁷Faivre, 21.

⁴⁸Emil Brunner, The Misunderstanding of the Church (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953), 78.

⁴⁹Ignatius, To the Magnesians 3-7.

⁵⁰1 Clement 44.

fifth century that this cleavage would be fully developed in the writings of Augustine.⁵¹

Nevertheless, Hippolytus (ca. A.D. 200) reflected an elevated regard for the power of the laity as had the Didache. He wrote:

Let the Bishop be ordained after he has been chosen by the people. When he has been moved [nominated] and shall please all let him with the presbytery and such bishops as may be present assemble with the people on a Sunday. While all give their assent, the bishops shall lay their hands upon him, and the presbytery shall stand in silence⁵² [emphasis added].

Clearly, community consent was the basis of the election of the bishop. It is reasonable to assume that the bishop's accountability for his stewardship of power would have taken full account of the place his parishioners held in his appointment. Volz points out that at the beginning of the third century the authority of the bishop did not revolve around his ordination, but around his moral fitness for the position.⁵³ This moral fitness was a critical factor in the acceptance of the bishop's leadership. Volz mentioned that

[a]t the beginning of the third century the authority of the pastor did not derive from his office or the rite of ordination, but was largely associated

⁵¹Volz, 44-46.

⁵²Hippolytus, The Apostolic Tradition, ed. and trans. Gregory Dix (London: Layston Press, 1968), 1.2.

⁵³Volz, 26.

with the interior qualities of aptitude, moral example, and the natural endowments (gifts of the Spirit) of the [office] holder.⁵⁴

He also argues that by 200 the "emerging consensus" of the leadership of the Church held that every congregation should elect its own bishop.⁵⁵

However, by the mid- to late third century, the role of the bishop was beginning to assume more hierarchical features. By 250, a monoepiscopal bishop was in every church.⁵⁶ In spite of the fact that the word hierus was descriptive of the faithful,⁵⁷ the term "priest" was applied to presbyters and bishops.⁵⁸ Increasingly, the Church was modeling itself after the nation of Israel.⁵⁹ Consequently, the laity was reduced to a paternalistic dependence upon the clergy. The Didascalia (ca. 275) further imposed the notion of the Old Testament priesthood upon the Christian Church by arguing for the bishop to assume the position of the high priest over the congregation.⁶⁰ In fact, the bishop as "father hen"⁶¹ was

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid., 29.

⁵⁷1 Pet. 2:9.

⁵⁸Ibid., 32.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Didascalia Apostolorum [Teachings of the Apostles], ed. R. Hugh Conolly (London: Oxford Press, 1929), 8.3, 9.1.

told (in a confusingly paradoxical bit of mixed gender imagery) that he should "love his laity like children" and "make them grow as chicks" in order to "make them reach the size of chickens."⁶²

The Didascalia--also as a further reflection of the heightening clerical paternalism which encroached upon the office of the bishop--spelled out the requirements for the position. Bishops were to be at least 50 years old.⁶³ This represents a significant movement from the Church's beginnings when its founder was a mere 30. This age requirement naturally accommodated the ethos of a greater wisdom, insight, and status which would later surround the cleric. The writer of the Didascalia obviously had such reverence in mind when he reflected upon the role of the laity. He wrote:

Just as the layman should love his fellow layman, so too should he love, honor and revere his bishop as a Father, Lord, and God. . . .⁶⁴ (Emphasis added.)

The Apostolic Tradition offers a concrete basis for the distinction between the clergy and the laity by seeking to legitimize the distance between the two groups. The clergy receives the laying on of hands because of their

⁶¹Faivre, 86.

⁶²Didascalia 2.20.2.

⁶³Ibid., 4.1-6, 8.1-4.

⁶⁴Ibid., 2.20.1.

special role in the liturgical service.⁶⁵ A distinction is made between the clergy and the laos, as well as the widows. The widows are to be kathistasthai, appointed; the kleros is to be cheirotonia, ordained.⁶⁶

The Influence of Constantine

The question naturally arises as to what this change of status between clergy and laity should be attributed. One contributing factor appears to be the entrance of Constantine into the Christian Church in the fourth century. In fact, his presence seems to concretize and make official the subjugation of the laity. With his professed conversion the emperor, by issuing the Edict of Milan (313), elevated the Church from its previously abject position of being merely tolerated into privileged status.⁶⁷ Constantine bestowed significant favor upon the Church and its leadership. He exempted the clergy from taxation while at the same time he prohibited even the private practice of paganism in the Empire.⁶⁸ In 313 he made financial grants to the clergy of North Africa.⁶⁹ At the Council of Arles (which he as Emperor summoned) he settled the Donatist controversy by backing the decisions of the clergy with

⁶⁵Apostolic Tradition, 10.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Walker, 101-6.

⁶⁸Ibid., 105.

⁶⁹Ibid., 106.

imperial might.⁷⁰ Consequently, theological or doctrinal dissent became not only heresy, but ultimately treason. Ironically, as Volz points out, during this era the Christian hierarchy "inherited the same position and authority which formerly belonged to the pagans."⁷¹ Constantine helped the bishops become men of great authority. During his reign the bishop became "a majestic figure,"⁷² and received special privileges among which were an imperial salary, a seat on city council, and direct access to the Emperor.⁷³

Another contributing factor to the subordination of the laity appears to be the rise of the Monarchical Episcopacy.⁷⁴ Under this organizational arrangement the

⁷⁰Latourette, 1: 171-75.

⁷¹Volz, 44.

⁷²George H. Williams, "The Ministry of the Ante-Nicene Church (c. 123-325)," The Ministry in Historical Perspectives, eds. H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams (New York: Harper and Bros., 1956), 53.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴In harmony with the generally accepted definition of the term, Monarchical Episcopacy refers to that form of church government in which one person presides over a local congregation while frequently assisted by a deacon and/or a presbyter. For this paper, the issue is not how this form of church government originated but the fact that it existed at all. It is almost unanimously agreed that by the mid-third century, this form of ecclesiastical governance was firmly fixed. Its presence represents a shift from the collegial, participative church government of the early centuries, to the more centralized form of government modeled after the Empire. For further discussion of the monoepiscopacy, see Strand, "The Rise of the Monarchical Episcopate," in Three Essays in Early Church History, 9-32.

powers of secular rulers were gradually arrogated by the clergy. The rights of the laity to teach, baptize, and discipline were assigned to and limited by the bishops. Theological justification for this arrangement came from the adoption of the Old Testament models of hierarchy. This ideology was such a powerful force in the Church of the fourth century that by the time of the Council of Nicea (325) the right of the people to vote on the choice of bishops was taken away and election depended solely upon the decision of the bishops of that particular province.⁷⁵ Clerical hierarchy was firmly established.

The Clericalization of Preaching

Admittedly, one must tread very carefully when attempting to examine the impact of the clergy-dominated structures of the fourth century upon the ministry of lay preaching. The hesitation felt by this writer is partly due to the fact that he has found Yngve Brillieth's assessment to be correct when he asserted that "the sources for a history of preaching in the post-apostolic era are very scanty."⁷⁶ As noted earlier, very few scholars have done research into the subject of lay preaching during the patristic period.⁷⁷

⁷⁵Volz, 37.

⁷⁶Yngve Brillieth, A Brief History of Preaching (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965), 18.

⁷⁷Edwin Charles Dargan, A History of Preaching: From the Apostolic Fathers to the Great Reformers, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1954), 1:29-39. Dargan here can

In light of the above, this writer will attempt to examine the nature of the counsel given in the context of a church in transition--from a virtual cult to a privileged relationship with the Roman Empire up through the end of the fourth century. The issue of whether preaching took on any unique characteristics during this period will be examined. The question is whether preaching came to be understood differently by the late third through the fourth century (under the Empire) than it was from its first-century roots. Was preaching still accessible to every believer? If not, was a specific ecclesiastical control imposed upon the task of preaching? In seeking to answer these questions, it is helpful to view Christian lay preaching against its synagogic backgrounds.

Brillioth observed in A Brief History of Preaching that because early Christian preaching had roots in the synagogue:

Scriptural exposition was not a privilege assigned to any specific office. It could be delegated to anyone who had the capacity for it. In the synagogues of the diaspora, a traveling stranger could be often asked to perform this service as a welcome change in the spiritual diet.⁷⁸

Worley made a similar point in Preaching and Teaching in the Early Church when he wrote:

only present the broad features of this period and some of the social factors connected with the disappearance of lay preaching.

⁷⁸Brillioth, 6.

Since any person who was invited to do so by the leader of the synagogue could read Scripture and give the address, travelling lecturers could spread different thoughts within Judaism.⁷⁹

Gowan also noted the accessibility of preaching and teaching to the non-ordained when he described the synagogue address of Jesus at Nazareth:

The preacher might be anyone who had some ability in interpreting the scriptures and so Jesus who had returned as a teacher to his hometown was asked to preach in Nazareth.⁸⁰

The point being here emphasized is that the fundamental tradition of early Christian preaching can be found in the synagogue of the diaspora. This tradition included prayer, scripture reading, and instruction in the Torah.⁸¹ But of equal importance is the fact that preaching was available to anyone "who had some ability in interpreting the scriptures."⁸² This tradition of equal opportunity preaching would adequately explain how the apostolic preachers were able to find access to the synagogues of the diaspora. For example, Paul was granted preaching opportunities in Antioch of Pisidia and elsewhere.⁸³ Seemingly, this accessible pulpit was also a characteristic

⁷⁹Worley, 60.

⁸⁰Gowan, 223.

⁸¹Worley, 58.

⁸²Gowan, 223.

⁸³Acts 13:13-43, 14:1, 17:1-3.

of the early Christian community, since the early Christian service of the first and second centuries was patterned after the synagogue.

However, by the late second and early third centuries, one may begin to see the first movements in a shift toward the clericalization of preaching. Evidence of a power struggle regarding "Who may preach?" was beginning to show itself. Two realities emerge as the reason for this situation. One has to do with the issue of ordination and the other has to do with the centrality of the bishop. And both may be seen in the problem between Origen and Demetrius, Bishop of Alexandria.

Origen (185-254) was born at Alexandria to Christian parents. As a student of Clement, he excelled in his study of the Scriptures and succeeded him as teacher of that catechetical school. As a successful expositor and teacher he was invited to preach in the church at Palestine. However, according to Eusebius, Demetrius (189-232) raised an objection to Origen's preaching in the presence of a bishop.⁸⁴ Demetrius had apparently deposed him from the leadership of the Alexandrian school and had suspended him from the presbyterate in two synods over which he presided.⁸⁵ Demetrius was aggrieved that Origen should stand before the bishop as an authoritative teacher.

⁸⁴Ecclesiastical History 6.8.23.

⁸⁵Williams, "Ministry of the Ante-Nicene Church," 45.

Because "it is doubtful that Origen was ever ordained a priest"⁸⁶ we may agree with Williams that Origen was "the last of the Christian charismatic and independent teachers."⁸⁷

This incident from the life of Origen appears to be the first explicit indicator of a clerical sensitivity over the right to preach. Apparently, authorization for liturgical preaching was to be obtained from the bishop. Eventually, this level of social control was to be confirmed and even extended at the Council of Arles (314), where Canon 18 never permitted the deacons to forget their "inferiority of the priests."⁸⁸ They were not to preach without their priest's consent. This clerical legislation clearly reveals that a restriction was placed upon preaching. No longer was preaching subject to a free and spontaneous charisma, as it had been earlier. No longer was preaching ministry accessible to institutionally "non-aligned" lay preachers and teachers. Preaching had come under the ecclesiastical domain of the clergy. According to Edwin Dargan's A History of Preaching, it was during this latter part of the patristic period that preaching (which formerly had been available to lay persons) became for the first time

⁸⁶Volz, 169.

⁸⁷Williams, "Ministry of the Ante-Nicene Church," 45.

⁸⁸Charles Joseph Hefele, A History of the Councils of the Church from the Original Documents, trans. W. R. Clark, 5 vols. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1894), 1: 194.

"recognized as the duty of a special class."⁸⁹ Dargan also went on to underscore the significance of the bishops' control over preaching. He wrote:

Others than presbyters could not formally preach in the churches without special permission of the bishop, and it seems that the privilege was not granted to presbyters themselves when a bishop was present without the request or sanction of the higher office.⁹⁰

This new reality represents a substantial departure from early Christian history. Prior to the clericalization of preaching in the third century, "this ministry of the word was the creative agency in the primitive church."⁹¹ However, later in the patristic period the task of preaching was "placed under subjection to an official ministry."⁹² Hans Kung also noticed this phenomenon when he wrote that the "charismatic structure" of the Church had formerly determined the preaching ministry. However, he continued, "we can observe how soon efforts were made . . . to make preaching the privilege of holders of a particular office. . . ."⁹³

It is important to ask, "What was the impact of the new arrangement upon the women who ministered during this time?"

⁸⁹Dargan, 37.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Lindsay, 72.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Hans Kung, The Church (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976), 377.

Tetlow noted that as the structure of the Church became increasingly reinterpreted through the Old Testament paradigms "women came to be excluded from both offices and from the function of preaching in the church."⁹⁴ A survey of some of the clerical legislation of the Church councils would substantiate Tetlow's assertion.

The first canon of Sargossa (ca. 380) prohibited women from teaching the faith.⁹⁵ Later, the 98th canon of the Council of Carthage plainly declared that a "A Layman may not teach in the presence of the clergy, except at their command."⁹⁶ And immediately following that rule, the 99th commanded in most emphatic terms that "A woman, however learned and holy, may not take upon herself to teach in an assembly of men."⁹⁷

It should be noted that the councils of the third and fourth centuries reflected the changed status of the laity in general. Thomas Lindsay wrote in The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries that:

In the end of the third century and onwards councils or synods became a regular part of the organization of the whole church, and they became more and more meetings of the bishops only, at which presbyters and deacons with the people of the church of the town where the council met, were present but almost

⁹⁴Tetlow, 127.

⁹⁵Hefele, 2: 292-93.

⁹⁶Ibid., 417.

⁹⁷Ibid.

entirely as spectators [emphasis added].⁹⁸

One may easily conclude with Lindsay that during this time the Church "lost its old democratic ideals; the laity counted for little and the clergy for much."⁹⁹

Another factor which legitimized the clericalization of preaching rested in the new meaning assigned to ordination. For Cyprian, ordination became the gateway to the rights, privileges, and prerogatives of the bishopric,¹⁰⁰ one of which was the right to preach. In the third century, ordination clearly "set the clergy apart from [above!] the laity."¹⁰¹ Ordination created two spheres, one "worldly," the other "godly."¹⁰² Later, at the Council of Neo-Caesarea (314-325) ordination assumed a type of baptismal significance, in that ordination was understood by some to remove the guilt associated with certain categories of sins. Canon 9 of Neo-Caesarea declared:

A priest who has committed a carnal sin before being ordained, and who of his own accord confesses that he has sinned before ordination, must not offer the holy sacrifice; but he may continue his other functions if he is zealous, for many think that other sins (except that of incontinence) were blotted out by his

⁹⁸Lindsay, 336.

⁹⁹Ibid., 357.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 302-4.

¹⁰¹Williams, "Ministry of the Ante-Nicene Church," 61.

¹⁰²Cyprian, The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage, trans. G. W. Clarke (New York: Newman Press, 1984), 52.

ordination as priest. But if he does not confess it, and he cannot clearly be convicted, it shall be in his own power to act.¹⁰³

In the preceding canon, one may see that ordination extended to the clergy a privilege which was not available to the laity: absolution of sins by means of ordination. More precisely, by the rite of ordination, the clergy had an opportunity to experience what no lay person could: a special calling, special status, and a higher level of spiritual life.

A third factor in the suppression of lay preaching appears to have been the Church's willingness to copy the structures of the imperial government in the third century. Lindsay noted that "the analogy of the imperial government was never absent from the thoughts of the leaders during the second half of the third century."¹⁰⁴ The structures of the Empire were used to consolidate power in the bishop by the end of the third century. Apparently, the analogy proceeded along the following lines: As the emperor is appointed by God to rule the empire, so the bishop is appointed by God to rule the Church. This reasoning is evident in later documents of the period under study. We will now look at the Didascalia in an attempt to see how the task of preaching, after having been lifted from the laity, was used

¹⁰³Hefele, 1: 227-28.

¹⁰⁴Lindsay, 301.

by the bishop to reinforce this magisterial understanding of the bishop's power and control over the Church.

Obviously, the writer of the Didascalia is interested in establishing the exclusive, monarchical authority of the bishop. The bishop was told that he held the "place of God Almighty" and should accordingly "sit in the Church and teach as having authority to judge them that sin in the room of God Almighty."¹⁰⁵ This notion of judging has reference to the disciplinary ministry which in the Didascalia was the bishop's alone to execute. He could judge others and at the same time be judged by no one.¹⁰⁶ However, in Chapter 5, the bishop was encouraged to "preach and testify, to rebuke publicly and openly." Clearly, here is an example of the preaching function being used to reinforce the bishop's control. When to this exhortation is added the fact that the bishop was to be esteemed "as the mouth of God,"¹⁰⁷ the authority of the bishop received the ultimate legitimization. Note that the laity was admonished that the bishop is "your chief and your leader, and he is your mighty king [and] he rules in place of the Almighty."¹⁰⁸ One can only imagine the tremendous power that the bishop wielded over the church through his preaching. Actually, more precisely than any

¹⁰⁵Didascalia 6.1.

¹⁰⁶Didascalia 8.

¹⁰⁷Didascalia 25.9.

¹⁰⁸Didascalia 8.20

other document, the Didascalia reflects how preaching was used to legitimize the social order in the Church of the third century.

Summary

From A.D. 200 to 400 the Christian Church passed through a period of gradual transformation. What was originally the Church of the people ultimately became the Church of its clerics. This transformation appears to have had both external and internal causes. Most importantly, the laity eventually was reduced to being ministerially dependent and in the process the collegial nature of the Church which Jesus founded was radically changed. The Christian Church came to reflect the class and social stratification which characterized the Empire. Preaching became a clericalized function, in that it was identified with and controlled by a particular class of Christians, namely, the clergy. In spite of some occasional lay preaching movements in history, preaching has still retained its primary association with the clergy.

The next chapter presents theological, psychological, and pedagogical essentials deemed necessary in order to declericalize preaching through the establishment of a viable, lay preaching program in the local church context.

CHAPTER 4

Theological, Psychological, and Pedagogical Essentials
for the Recovery of Lay Preaching:
Practical Considerations

Having attempted in Chapter 3 to identify the forces by which the ministry of preaching became associated with a specific ecclesiastical class (i.e., the clergy),¹ this chapter is intended to set forth the potential benefits of a lay preaching program, and the prerequisites which must be in place if the ministry of lay preaching is to be reclaimed in the local church.

One should be aware that in traditions where there has not been an active program of lay preaching a more fundamental question must be addressed in the local church context. In April of 1989, this writer, as a pastor in Riverside, California, organized a group of four laypersons to conduct an evangelistic outreach. They conducted evening meetings on four nights a week (Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday) from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. The series of meetings was scheduled for three weeks. The members of the

¹Lindsay was correct when he wrote that before the clericalization of preaching "this ministry of the word was the creative agency in the primitive church . . . [but] it was overthrown or thrust aside and placed under subjection to an official ministry springing out of the congregation, and it has never regained the recognized position it had in the first century and a half" (p. 71).

congregation assisted the four lay evangelists by distributing invitations for interested persons to attend. At the end of the meeting, five persons were baptized, and another 10 continued to receive studies.

However, the meetings were not carried out without some misunderstanding on the part of some of the more traditional members. Some parishioners described the meetings as a "waste of time." Others thought that the pastoral staff was shirking its responsibilities. Still others declared the lay persons "an embarrassment." In fact, only a minority of the church deemed the meetings worthy of attendance. Though painful, the benefit of that experience for this writer was that it provided an opportunity to reflect upon the nature of lay service and what means would be best to empower the Church's mission. The reader should be aware that the aforementioned experience forms part of the background for this research.

Given the fact that there are paid clergy persons who serve the congregation, is there a necessity for laity to participate in preaching from the pulpit? This question will be explored in the following section.

Should Laypersons Preach?

Some pastors and laypersons have exceeding difficulty with the proposition that preaching belongs not to the clergy, but to the Church. They question whether the laity belong in the pulpit, given what they perceive as the clear amateur versus professional distinction which exists between

the laity and clergy. William Skudlarek offers an insightful reason for lay preaching:

Lay preachers, speaking out of their experience can show how the word intersects with and interprets those human realities which priests [other clergy as well?], by their training and lifestyle simply cannot, or for the most part, do not know of first hand.²

Also, the New Testament provides at least three perspectives for including lay persons in the preaching rotation.

Reason One: The Unity of All Believers

Because the Church is regarded in the New Testament as the creation of God, all believers stand on equal ground. They are united to God, and indissolubly connected to each other.³

Reason Two: The Priesthood of All Believers

According to 1 Pet. 2:9, the Church is a congregation of priestly persons. Intercession and sacrifice belong to the Church. Consequently, the ministry of reconciling the world to God is a communal obligation. To the degree that preaching is a vehicle in that ministry, it belongs to the Church.

Reason Three: The Spirit's Gift(s) to All Believers

²William Skudlarek, "Lay Preaching and Liturgy," Worship 56 (May 1982): 502.

³Gal. 3:27-28; Eph. 4:1-6.

One very clear teaching to the New Testament is the giftedness of all believers.⁴ The fact that the Spirit is still able to gift whomsoever It will, suggests that any believer can be gifted for proclamation. Hans Kung contended:

The Charisms of the Spirit are various Charisms which have been granted to Christians ought to be acknowledged with gratitude and pressed into service. In this way sermons by lay people will be possible without specific ecclesiastical permission or authority.⁵

Theological Reeducation of the Clergy

An obvious starting point from which to commence the process by which lay preaching can be recovered is to begin with the clergy. Presumably, this is where the education needs to begin because as Anne Rowthorn has pointed out:

The long history of the Church, until the Protestant Reformation . . . is the tale of the takeover of the whole Church by an increasingly powerful--and at times ruthless and corrupt--clerical minority.⁶

For this reason Rowthorn, in looking at the American Church observed that:

The Church in North America is in desperate need of a liberation movement, a movement through which the laity can

⁴1 Cor. 12.

⁵Kung, 378.

⁶Anne Rowthorn, The Liberation of the Laity (Wilton, Conn.: Morehouse-Barlow, 1986), 21.

regain their sight, their voice, their free movement on the body of Christ.⁷

Though in the modern Church "clerical tyranny" is not so glaring as it may have been in the Medieval Church, its impact can be observed in many of the ecclesiastical practices today. When one remembers that the architects of policy and procedures for most Protestant denominations are clergy persons, and that lay input is at best forced, and at worst, negligible, then one may conclude that Rowthorn's insight holds substantial merit.

But how can this situation of ministerial centrality and lay dependence be changed? Robert Wilson and William Willimon made a point concerning dying congregations which may also be applied to the resurrection of lay preaching. They wrote that the three most important factors "in revitalizing these dying congregations are leadership, leadership, leadership."⁸ It was Elton Trueblood, the Quaker scholar who noted:

If we can reach these people [the Clergy] with a new vision of the Church, we can consequently reach others through them. The ministry is the point at which to begin because ministers are usually placed where they can make a difference.⁹

⁷Ibid., 23.

⁸William H. Willimon and Robert L. Wilson, "Give Us Leaders, Not Managers," Adventist Review, 25 Jan. 1990: 9.

⁹Elton Trueblood, The Incendiary Fellowship (New York: Harper, 1967), 35.

Theological Essentials

Clearly, the style and commitment of local church leadership to this task of empowering the Church for service will be the one, most important factor in the recovery of lay preaching. With this as a given, one must analyze how the clergyperson in the local church operationalizes the following theological issues : (1) laity, (2) ordination, (3) preaching and, (4) servanthood. One may safely assume that these critical areas of clergy understanding hold important implications for the local church's response to lay preaching. These items merit further discussion as as provided in the following paragraphs.

Laity

A clear picture of the New Testament's laos is vital if lay preaching is to be resurrected. One cannot help but affirm that the title of the work All Are Called must be the fundamental starting point for an understanding of the laity. Calling belongs to all believers.¹⁰ For purposes of discussion (though never theologically), calling and service can be differentiated. First comes the call to discipleship.¹¹ This call is extended to every believer to follow Christ. Its acceptance is confirmed in baptism, in which the believer consciously identifies with the life,

¹⁰See 1 Cor. 1:9 and 7:20-21.

¹¹1 Thess. 2:12-13; Matt. 11:28-30; Eph. 5:1-2.

death, and resurrection of Christ.¹² The act of baptism ordains believers to service, for with the affirmation of the Spirit comes the obligation to be a witness in the world.¹³ Missiologist and missionary Gottfried Oosterval, crystallized the issue of the identity of the laity when he wrote:

Who then are the laity? All who believe in Christ and are sanctified by Him.
 The sign of belonging to the laity in the New Testament is the act of baptism.¹⁴

A corollary to Oosterval's observation is that laity consists of all of the members of the local church, including the pastor. As such, all within the local church have the obligation to serve in some capacity. Emil Brunner noted in his The Misunderstanding of the Church that "there exists in the ecclesia a universal duty and right of service, a universal readiness to serve."¹⁵ This universal duty and right properly belongs to all members.

Another aspect of an accurate theology of the laity lies in the notion that all the Church is priestly.¹⁶

¹²Rom. 6:1-6. Also see WCC, Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry, 2, hereafter cited as BEM.

¹³WCC, BEM, 2.

¹⁴Gottfried Oosterval, Mission: Possible--The Challenge of Mission Today (Nashville: Southern Publishing Assoc., 1972), 109.

¹⁵Brunner, 50.

¹⁶1 Pet. 2:9.

Indeed, the Church is composed of "kings and priests."¹⁷ If this means anything, it certainly calls for an affirmation of the dignity of every member. It means that no one in the Church should be considered "just a layperson." Every person is responsible to God and to the community for a specific, intentional ministry. Brunner also noted that

one thing is supremely important: that all minister and that nowhere is to be perceived a separation or even merely a distinction between those who do and those who do not minister, between the active and the passive members of the body, between those who give and those who receive.¹⁸

The priestly work of every individual believer involves intercession¹⁹ and sacrifice.²⁰ When taken with radical seriousness, it further implies that

Every Christian is a priest for the world. . . . The priesthood of all believers is a fellowship in which each Christian, instead of living for himself, lives before God for others. . . ."²¹

Moreover, the Church is for ministry and ministry is for Christians. Ayres presented a poignant insight on the issue of the ministry of every believer:

¹⁷Rev. 1:6, 5:10.

¹⁸Brunner, 50.

¹⁹1 Tim. 2:1-5.

²⁰Rom. 12:1-3.

²¹Kung, 381.

You [layperson] are a minister of Christ. You have a share in the ministry of the church. . . . If, then the whole church exists to serve the world and does not exist except as a servant, any restriction of the ministry to a small fraction of the church's membership becomes ridiculous. . . . The main reason the church obviously fails in being a servant--and in this respect, fails in being the church--is that the ministry is seen as the prerogative of the clergy rather than of all the laity in all areas of their lives.²²

Those who would (in practice) demarcate between the clergy and the laity miss the point of community. There are no graduated distinctions within the Body of Christ. Differences of function exist, but the challenge before the contemporary Church is how to implement the priesthood of believers in a manner which does not create and reinforce ecclesiastical stratification based on differentiated functions. This was a challenge that Luther himself apparently had not anticipated. Greenleaf argued that

[w]hen Martin Luther made his break with the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century, he postulated the priesthood of all believers as his goal. It did not come off because he did not devise a role for the pastor that would permit it.²³

First of all, contrary to Greenleaf's view, one may make a strong case concerning Luther's success in the elevation of the priesthood doctrine. Indeed, Protestantism

²²Ayres, 31.

²³Robert Greenleaf, Servant Leadership (New York: Paulist, 1977), 81.

itself stands as a monument to Luther's efforts. However, on a narrower front, Luther did not concern himself with the structures which formerly had prohibited the priesthood of believers. He failed to recognize that the medieval Church produced a pyramidal structure which aided the perpetuation of its ideology. By attempting to de-clericalize the local church through the recovery of lay preaching, it is hoped that the structurally-supported ideology which imposes pulpit silence upon the laity will be called into question. Further, it is hoped that the implications of the priesthood doctrine might be fully realized, and that the role of the pastor as enabler might facilitate that realization.

Ordination

Another theological prerequisite which must be in place for a ministry of lay preaching to be resurrected is a clear, status-free conception of ordination. Unfortunately, great injustice has historically been done to the ordination concept. By investing the rite of ordination with Latin/Roman legal significance, chierotonein came to be viewed as ordinare where the notion of the "special status of a group [clergy] distinct from the plebs [laity]"²⁴ separated these two groups into differing ecclesiastical categories. The ordained were invested with special standing before God on account of their clerical office.

²⁴WCC, BEM, 31.

The laity were those whose work was in the world--secular, and non-religious.²⁵

This dichotomy represents an intriguing development. It is not that the holding of office is inherently wrong because, as noted in the BEM document, the "Church has never been without persons holding specific authority and responsibility."²⁶ But the point here emphasized is that clerical authority has not always been construed by clergy as an instrument with which to empower members for service. Therefore, it is imperative that this understanding be recaptured by modern clergy. The authority which the pastor accrues should and must arise out of service to God, God's people, and the world. And as such, its purpose in its entirety is to enable the local church to execute Christian witness in God's world. The BEM document points out that

The chief responsibility of the ordained ministry is to assemble and build up the body of Christ by proclaiming and teaching the Word of God [and] by celebrating the sacraments. . . .²⁷

The BEM document perceptively reflects a sensitivity to the charismatic authority which authentic preaching attracts to the clergy by affirming that the preaching privilege does

²⁵Oosterval, 104-5.

²⁶WCC, BEM, 21.

²⁷Ibid., 22.

not belong to the clergy but that "any member of the body may share in proclaiming and teaching the Word of God."²⁸

Trueblood again has noted that the pastor, by virtue of ordination, does hold a special place in the Church. He sees in the pastor a critical obligation in relationship to the rest of the Church:

The ministry is for all who are called to share in Christ's life, but the pastorate is for those who possess the peculiar gift of being able to help other men and women to practice any ministry to which they are called.²⁹

This understanding of the pastorate is exceedingly helpful. A vision of the pastor as a player-coach in which the pastor is "the discoverer, the developer and the trainer of the powers" of the believers is a useful metaphor when envisioning the clergy.³⁰ Ordination to the pastorate should signal a readiness on the part of the ordained to release the gifts of ministry resident within the congregation. And if those gifts include preaching then, by virtue of her/his ordination, the cleric is morally and ethically obligated to bring those gifts to the service of the Church. After identifying that ordained ministry is "to build up the body of Christ by proclaiming and teaching the Word of God" the BEM document in its commentary further added that "any member of the body may share in the

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Trueblood, 41.

³⁰Ibid., 43.

proclaiming and teaching the Word of God."³¹ It strikes this writer that a critical component of any attempt to resurrect lay preaching must be a clergy leadership which has worked through a theology of ordination that is free from "sacramental presuppositions."³² Clearly, the architects of the BEM document saw the relationship between the enablement of the local church and the understanding of ordination held by a cleric.

To summarize, the following represents what this writer concludes is a New Testament position on ordination: Ordination is the witness of the community to the gifts of a person to build and extend the Body of Christ. That collective witness does not automatically affirm or imply a charism of preaching as present in the candidate, but a commitment of life and experience to do whatever is necessary to nurture and strengthen the Church. This in and of itself would mean therefore, that where the "charism of preaching" is present in a church, the ordained are morally bound to activate and cultivate that gift in the believers. Thus, if lay preaching is to be resurrected the greatest degree of dedication will be required of the clergy.

Preaching

Central to the effective establishment of a lay preaching program will be the concept of preaching held by

³¹WCC, BEM, 22.

³²Ibid., 40.

the local cleric. Does the pastor see preaching as a gift of the Spirit? Is it an institutionally conferred privilege? Are pastors alone "called" to preach? As a means of enabling lay preaching, it is vital that the pastor have identified the role of preaching in the larger mission of the Church. In the third and fourth centuries, the leaders of the Christian Church determined by both their pronouncements and practices that preaching was the domain of the clergy (see Chapter 3). However, the question for Christian clergy today is: "Does the New Testament substantiate that understanding?" To whom does preaching legitimately belong?

Not only is 1 Pet. 1:9 a critical passage for understanding the status of what has come to be called the laity, it is also instructive for understanding the work of preaching. In this passage, Peter describes the Church as a community of persons who have been called to "declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."³³ Interestingly, the word translated "declare" is the root word exangellô. In its secular usage, this common word signified a "messenger who proclaims abroad . . . what is concealed from the gaze of spectators."³⁴ The term belongs to the angellô family, which expresses the

³³1 Pet. 1:9.

³⁴Julius Schniewind, "Angelia," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, vol. 1, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 69. Work hereafter referred to as TDNT.

"imparting [of] something unknown or declaring something concealed. . . ."³⁵ Words such as "proclaim," "tell," and "publish," are all appropriate translations (depending upon the preposition attached to angellô). Peter's application of exangellô to the believing community indicates that the responsibility for telling the Gospel belongs to the entire Church, not simply to a particular class within the Church. Therefore, it is legitimate to understand preaching, as "the total media by which the gospel is communicated. . . ."³⁶ Thomas Long, Professor of Preaching at Princeton Theological Seminary, contended that "God calls the whole church to proclaim the gospel and every disciple of Jesus Christ is a part of this calling."³⁷

Unfortunately, the Church and clergy has been slow to implement that fact. Don Wardlaw noted that "the Church for centuries has sanctioned preaching as the expression of a separated, commanding individual."³⁸ As documented earlier, this tendency of the Church as witnessed in history has contributed to the clericalization of the preaching task.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Skudlarek, 501.

³⁷Thomas Long, The Witness of Preaching (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1989), 12.

³⁸Don M. Wardlaw, "Preaching as the Interface of Two Social Worlds: The Congregation as Corporate Agent in the Act of Preaching," Preaching as a Social Act, ed. Arthur Van Seters (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988), 60.

It is important for the contemporary pastor to recognize that the cleric's preaching is rooted in the larger context of a total ministry on the part of the congregation. Indeed, preaching is an important ministry. This fact must be affirmed unrelentingly. Moreover, one may make a case for preaching being the central ministry within the Church. Christian preaching was inaugurated at the resurrection of Jesus.³⁹ As proclamation, it breaks the silence surrounding God's activity in the world.⁴⁰ Christian preaching continues the preaching of the earthly Jesus.⁴¹ Preaching enables the reconciliation between God and the world.⁴² Preaching reminds believers of their Christian identity and of the implications of that identity in the world.⁴³ Lischer pointed out that "preaching is the final expression of theology."⁴⁴ Preaching fulfills the mandate that the "redeeming word" circulate into all the world.⁴⁵ According to the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, "true proclamation does not take place

³⁹Richard Lischer, A Theology of Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), 30.

⁴⁰Fred Craddock, Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985), 55.

⁴¹David Buttrick, Homiletic: Moves and Structures (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 451.

⁴²2 Cor. 5:18-20.

⁴³Acts 14:21-22.

⁴⁴Lischer, 27.

⁴⁵Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:14-15; Acts 1:7-8.

through Scripture alone, but through its exposition."⁴⁶ Therefore, preaching functions as an indispensable component of the ministry of the Church in that, it gives voice to the message of the Bible. Paul, in discussing mission to the world, illuminated the function of preaching:

How, then, can they [those who have not heard the gospel] call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?⁴⁷

Clearly, the ministry of preaching is vital to the Church's ministry. Yet, when Paul discusses the gifts to the Church in Romans 12, he stresses that all believers have different gifts. If one translates parakaleô as preaching (i.e., exhorting), then it must be noted that the term appears toward the bottom of the list.⁴⁸ Nowhere in Paul's discussion of gifts does one find Paul making preaching the focus of all gifts. Clearly, preaching is a ministry. It is a very important ministry! But when that assertion is made, in many instances it represents a correct observation, but a faulty assumption. Preaching is a ministry, not the ministry in a local church. That is, in the life and ministry of the local church, preaching is but one aspect of the larger mission of the saved community. Long is correct

⁴⁶Gerhard Friedrich, "Kerussô," TDNT, 3: 712.

⁴⁷Rom. 10:14-15.

⁴⁸Rom. 12:8.

when he observes that "the whole church proclaims the Gospel and the preaching of sermons is but one part of this larger ministry."⁴⁹ For the cleric who is considering the initiation of a lay preaching program, this theological perspective on preaching will put preaching in its proper setting in the life of the local church.

But what of the classical understanding of preaching as a call, or a gift? First of all, one must affirm as correct what was written as the conclusion of a scholarly article on preaching (*kerussô*), namely, "God does not send books to men [sic]; He sends messengers . . .[but] not every Christian is called to preach."⁵⁰ The message of Eph. 4:11-12 bears out that God does indeed "give" to the Church certain persons whose principal function is to equip the believers. Robert Schaper was correct when he insisted that the "preaching of the word is a divinely provided means for the nurture of the people of God."⁵¹ But nowhere in the New Testament can one establish that those whom God has called are limited to persons occupying clerical office or to those who ultimately are appointed to one. Preachers are sent,⁵² and it is that sending which in part, gives to her/him authority. One scholar has argued that

⁴⁹Long, 12.

⁵⁰Friedrich, 712.

⁵¹Robert N. Schaper, "Menu or Meal," Theology, News and Notes 32, no. 4 (Dec. 1985): 3.

⁵²Rom. 10:14-15.

[t]he one who sends gives him the content of the message and authority. . . . A preacher is not a reporter who recounts his own experiences. He is the agent of someone higher whose will he loudly and clearly makes known to the public. Without calling and sending preaching is a self-contradiction and even a deception. It holds out something which has no reality. If there is no sending, the preaching of Christ is propaganda, not mission.⁵³

Therefore, we conclude that the New Testament notion of "the one who sends" indicates that part of the preacher's freedom to act lies on the vertical plane. God's sending (responded to in faith) imparts authority. However, there is also a horizontal dimension to the preacher's authority to function within and on behalf of the people of God. Every pastor is first a member, then a leader. It should be remembered that "because preachers are people who have been baptized into Christ, they are members of Christ's body."⁵⁴ Preachers emerge from within the saved community. Long reminded pastors that

[w]hen we who preach open the sanctuary door . . . and find a congregation waiting there for us, it is easy to forget that we come from these people, not to them from the outside.⁵⁵

⁵³Friedrich, 713.

⁵⁴Long, 12.

⁵⁵Ibid., 11.

Clerics have been prayerfully set apart by the community as their representatives.⁵⁶ One may consider this setting apart by God's people as the horizontal aspect of the cleric's authority to act. As clerics, we can never forget that the congregation witnesses to our ministry. Calling may come from God, but the essential affirmation of that ministry arises primarily from God's people. By means of a similitude, Jurgen Moltmann insightfully depicted this authorizing element within the relationship between pastor and people.

We can take our bearings from the simple visible procedure . . . one person or more gets up in front of the congregation in order to preach the gospel, to baptize, to prepare the meal, to arrange the feast. . . . These people come from the community but come forward in front of it and act in Christ's name How then are we to understand the position of these people with their particular charges or assignments? They come from God's people, stand up in front of God's people and act in God's name.⁵⁷

This understanding of the horizontal dimension of calling should be sobering because it implies that the cleric is the recipient of the collective trust of the witnessing body of believers. Even though the "New Testament knows nothing of sacral personages who are

⁵⁶Ibid., 13.

⁵⁷Jurgen Moltmann, The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Eschatology (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 303.

inviolable in the world,"⁵⁸ still the position of the cleric elicits an unusual level of trust from church people. In turn, clerics may return that trust by preaching in an affirming manner, in a manner which transmits her/his confidence in the listeners' commitment to growth. Jabusch pointed out:

The pastor who distrusts the people preaches in an authoritarian and paternalistic way and tries to dominate in order to exclude any chance of a mistake or an accident. . . . He or she may boast of fidelity to the gospel, but in fact the real needs of the flock are forgotten and the needs of the preacher have become primary.⁵⁹

Contrary to a heavy-handed style of preaching, Fred Craddock, of Emory University's Candler School of Theology, demonstrated how a preacher who is interested in the needs, cares, and concerns of the parishioners shares the word:

If a minister takes seriously the role of listeners in preaching, there will be sermons expressing for the whole church, and with God as the primary audience, the faith, the doubt, the fear, the anger, the love, the joy, the gratitude that is in all of us.⁶⁰

Servanthood

Having worked through a Biblical doctrine of the Church, a non-sacramental understanding of her/his ordination, and a theological perspective on preaching, the

⁵⁸Friedrich, 688.

⁵⁹Willard Jabusch, The Person in the Pulpit (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980), 56.

⁶⁰Craddock, 26-27.

cleric must then consider how he/she will express that leadership in the local church. Will it be expressed in servanthood or domination? A leader's understanding of the leader/follower relationship is critical to whether the members will indeed be led or driven. Consequently, another prerequisite which lends itself to the facilitation of lay preaching is a philosophy of leadership which is grounded in the concept of service as opposed to authoritarian prerogative. This writer is in agreement with Fuller Theological Seminary's Robert Banks when he writes:

Leadership is not vested in one person or a group of persons but in the whole body, though certain people, by virtue of their maturity and service, stand out from others and play an important role in the congregation's life.⁶¹

Servanthood is clearly the key New Testament category in which local church leadership is to be understood. Words such as diakonos and doulos (generally translated "minister" and "servant" respectively) have the concept of service inherent in their meaning. The servant-leader offers service to God and God's people through that leading. One must recognize that leaders are not set above the local church, but within the local body of believers for the purpose of enablement. Lawrence Richards and Gilbert Martin shed light upon pastoral leadership when they indicated that the model for Christian leadership is "servant rather than

⁶¹Robert Banks, "A Biblical Vision of the People of God," Theology, News and Notes 37, no. 1 (June 1990): 6.

ruler."⁶² This designation implies that the leader of a local church will be quick to identify the needs of the congregation and will seek to mobilize the resources and/or the gifts of the congregation in the remediation of those needs. Jabusch observed:

The caring preacher wants his or her parishioners to grow, to move from immaturity to maturity, to go from a kind of spiritual childishness to the wisdom and strength of Christian adults.⁶³

However, a leader must be careful that the servant metaphor is not carried to an absurd extreme. For this writer, "servant" is not to be read as "valet" or "bell hop," for this posture on the part of the pastor would be contrary to the example of Jesus, who never relinquished his intentionality. It is this writer's view that part of the crisis of leadership which the modern Church faces is directly attributable to a convoluted doctrine of servant leadership. In America this distortion has sacralized leadership passivity by calling it openness. It has divinized consensus management by calling it responsiveness. And interestingly, it is grounded in the medieval conception of an emaciated Christ who lacked vigor and intentionality. However, the Jesus of the New Testament was clearly a man of action. He intentionally empowered his followers through

⁶²Lawrence O. Richards and Gilbert R. Martin, A Theology of Personal Ministry: Spiritual Giftedness in the Local Church (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 297.

⁶³Jabusch, 54.

commissioning,⁶⁴ modeling,⁶⁵ training and dispatching,⁶⁶ and empowering.⁶⁷ By teaching and example, Jesus demonstrated that leadership is the authority and the ability to inspire positive action. His leadership enabled others toward autonomous ministry.

Contemporary leadership cannot passively spend its time listening for directives (euphemistically known as suggestions) from certain influential parishioners, and after having executed those directives look for the affirmation of a "job well done." Rather, as Robert Neville, Dean of Boston University School of Theology has so aptly pointed out, intentional leadership

involves a readiness to tell people what they don't want to hear and to get them to do things they don't want to do. Leadership works for cooperation but doesn't assume it. Leadership longs for emotional support but must be prepared to press on without it.⁶⁸

If lay preaching is to be recovered, Neville's call for bold leadership will be the vehicle of its resurrection. Unfortunately, in too many instances, leaders function as managers rather than leaders. Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus,

⁶⁴Matt. 28:18-20.

⁶⁵John 13:13-15.

⁶⁶Matt. 10:5-8.

⁶⁷Acts 2:8.

⁶⁸Robert C. Neville, "The Apostolic Character of Ordained Ministry," Quarterly Review 10, no. 4 (Winter 1990): 8.

leaders in the development of corporate leadership, argue that "managers are people who do things right, and leaders are people who do the right thing."⁶⁹ Here is a significant distinction. Leaders do visioning, dreaming, goal-setting. Managers are responsible for the daily tasks of maintenance which keep an organization operational.⁷⁰ Willimon and Wilson elaborated upon this distinction when they wrote:

Leaders establish new institutions; they revitalize and reform old ones. They tend to be controversial because they inevitably challenge existing social structures and accepted ways of doing things. . . . In contrast, managers accept the validity of the institutional status quo and give attention to its maintenance.⁷¹

The leader versus manager distinction as a means of differentiating leadership behavior is helpful, because it provides categories which pastors may use to assess the nature of their activities in parish life. However, unlike corporations which generally pay to keep these two functions separate, pastors usually are responsible for seeing that both of these functions are carried out in the local church. This fact alone lends itself to a possible confusion, and perhaps misprioritization, of the two. If we hear Willimon and Wilson saying anything, they are affirming that the

⁶⁹Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, Leaders: Strategies for Taking Charge (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 21.

⁷⁰Willimon and Wilson, 8.

⁷¹Ibid., 8.

leadership function is the principal function of the pastor. The managerial function is secondary. Warner Burke maintains that "leaders should think long range versus day-to-day operations as managers do."⁷² He further argues that "leaders are loners, risk takers, and visionaries."⁷³ At base, this understanding of leadership means that pastors must take time to reflect and project for long-range planning. Indeed, time is needed to nourish one's dreams regarding what the Church can be in the world. Robert Greenleaf, in his now classic work Servant Leadership, asserted that in society

[n]ot much happens without a dream. And for something great to happen, there must be a great dream. Much more than a dreamer is required; but the dream must be there first.⁷⁴

At the risk of launching a broadside at modern clergy, it does indeed appear that this type of visionary leadership is largely absent in the American Church. When one considers the general dearth of vigorous lay ministry present in the churches, it appears to this writer that the structures of clericalization have, in some sense, robbed the modern clergy of its commitment to the original vision of an empowered group of local believers. When one

⁷²W. Warner Burke, "Leadership as Empowering Others," Executive Power: How Executives Influence People and Organizations, ed. S. Srivasta (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1986), 65.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Greenleaf, 16.

considers the dynamism which accompanied the early Church, it does appear that affluence, materialism and secularism have caused the modern Church to lose, in the language of the Apocalypse, its "first love."⁷⁵ Willimon and Wilson are almost scathing as they describe what clericalization (and its antecedent, institutionalism) has done to the clergy. They point out that:

The rhetoric is that of bold leadership; the reality is that of control and maintenance of the institutional status quo at all levels of the connectional structure and suppression of alternative points of view.⁷⁶

The idea that clergypersons in some way are perceived to desire control over the Church suggests that there is a third item which merits consideration if the ministry of lay preaching is to be recovered: the psychological state needed in local church pastors in relationship to the issues of power and control.

Psychological Essentials

Leadership Behavior

In an interview conducted with Norman Miles, chairman of the Christian Ministry Department of Andrews University Theological Seminary, it was pointed out that, from his perspective, the most glaring impediment to the realization of an active lay preaching program will probably be found in

⁷⁵Rev. 1:4.

⁷⁶Willimon and Wilson, 9.

the psychological make up of the local church pastor. He commented:

The question is, Les, why would a pastor want to have lay preachers in the church, when for many the only thing which underscores their leadership is preaching. I mean, a pastor would have to be awfully secure to sponsor this type of program. Suppose the lay preacher turns out to be a more talented pulpiteer than the pastor? Could the average pastor handle that?⁷⁷

Miles' question is a critical one, for it does become increasingly clear that when one reflects upon the implications of what this project demands, an imminently secure clergy is required. Such security is necessary for one reason: the path from the most substantial theology to the establishment of a pedagogical program runs through the psyche of the pastor of the local church. Trueblood was quite insightful when he observed that "the liberated minister's first task is that of teacher" because "if the members are to be effective ambassadors, they must be taught."⁷⁸

The critical question for any pastor who wishes to teach lay preaching will be, "Do I possess the adequate psycho-emotional resources to cope with the success of a group of vibrant lay preachers within my congregation." The following section of this chapter provides an overview of

⁷⁷Norman Miles, personal interview, 30 Jan. 1991.

⁷⁸Trueblood, 44-45.

some of the critical psychic factors which are deemed vital for local church leadership to establish lay preaching.

Much important research has been devoted to the study of leadership styles in given social organizations. Between the 1930s and the late 1950s, the traditional view of leadership by Divine Endowment was beginning to be considered outmoded. That view of leadership--and its corresponding "great man"⁷⁹ theory--had formerly held that some men were gifted with certain traits which commended them to leadership. Ostensibly, no women were considered under this category. Exponents of the "great man" view were persons like Carlyle, Nietzsche, and William James.⁸⁰ They concluded that personalities such as Caesar, Napoleon, Churchill, and selected others would qualify for this title.⁸¹ In contrast, leadership theorists in the 1950s were beginning to examine the environment in which leadership operated. They were interested in the dynamics of the social situation of leadership. "Situation-oriented" research undermined faith in the "trait-based" approach to leadership by contending that "the situation has [as] much

⁷⁹James Spotts, "The Problem of Leadership: A Look at Some Recent Findings of Behavioral Research," Leadership and Social Change, eds. William R. Lassey and Richard R. Fernandez (La Jolla, Calif.: University Associates, 1977), 44-47.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Ibid.

to do with what leadership skills will be required" as does the individual leader in any group situation.⁸²

By the 1960s the "interactionistic" approach to leadership became popular. In this approach, the correlation between task accomplishment and leader-worker relationship was studied. The general conclusions of this type of study suggested that leaders of successful organizations devote more of their time to the human aspects of leadership versus the production aspects of their work.⁸³

Today, much significant study has been devoted to the concept of "situational leadership." This research suggests that effective leaders will examine the context in which their leadership occurs and then proceed to choose a leadership behaviors considered appropriate to that context.⁸⁴

The significance of this brief overview of leadership research lies in the influence each has exerted upon the concepts of leadership held by church persons in any given era. Interestingly, when there have been shifts in leadership style in the corporate world, in many instances there have been parallel shifts in clergy styles of leadership. From the autocratic versus democratic concepts

⁸²Ibid., 48.

⁸³Ibid., 48-49.

⁸⁴Gary A. Yukl, Leadership in Organizations (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1989), 104-8.

of the 1960s to the management-by-objectives approach of the 1970s, church administrators have mirrored these changes.

Power Issues

However, in all of these varied approaches (and there are many more than this writer has attempted to examine) one clear common denominator appears to connect all of them: the concept of power. Leadership discussions inevitably raise the psychic and organizational issues of power and control. Meryl Reis Louis pointed out:

Power is commonly considered the capacity to influence others.

Individuals exercise power through their actions. Power is the abstract capacity; action, the immediate reality.⁸⁵

The more one studies leadership, the more clear the truth becomes that where there is no power, there can be no leadership. Toni Falbo, B. Lynn New, and Margie Evans, a group of educators from Austin, Texas, found that selected clergy persons' perception of their authority base directly influenced their willingness to influence their congregation.⁸⁶ (Only male ministers were the subjects of the study.) These researchers found that those who viewed their authority as coming directly from God (i.e.,

⁸⁵Meryl Reis Louis, "Putting Executive Action in Context: An Alternative View of Power," Executive Power: How Executives Influence People and Organizations, ed. S. Srivasta (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1986), 111.

⁸⁶Toni Falbo, B. Lynn New, and Margie Gaines, "Perceptions of Authority and the Power Strategies Used by Clergymen," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 26, no. 4 (Dec. 1987): 507.

charismatic) were more willing to exert influence upon local church process than those who believed that their power was mediated through the tradition of the Church (i.e., traditional or legal-rational).

Leadership research has pointed to numerous sources of power in organizations. Yukl provides a helpful overview of what those sources might be for anyone working in an organization.⁸⁷ Yukl holds that "in order to understand the effectiveness of a leader, it is necessary to consider several types of power relationships. . . ."⁸⁸ He categorizes the various types of authority which devolve upon leaders depending upon the nature of the organization he/she is leading (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Sources of Power in Organizations

Position Power	*Formal Authority *Control over Resources *Control over Punishment *Control over Information *Ecological Control
Personal Power	*Expertise *Friendship/Loyalty *Charisma
Political Power	*Control over Decision Processes *Coalitions *Co-optation *Institutionalization

⁸⁷Yukl, 14.

⁸⁸Ibid., 15.

In Christian community, leadership represents the exercise of one's influence (power) in such a way that others are enabled to perform ministry more effectively. Leadership's outcome is found in increasing the other's ability to minister more maturely and with greater insight and effectiveness. Observation indicates that pastors appear to be principally the recipients of personal power due to the fact that ultimately the Church is a voluntary association in which the kinds of corporate controls (punishments, paychecks, etc.) are used in many for profit organizations.⁸⁹ Personal power is founded upon the elements cited by Yukl (i.e., expertise, friendship, charisma). However, in church leadership one would have to add other character qualities such as integrity, compassion, honesty, and commitment. Another reason for viewing the cleric as the bearer of personal power arises out of the fact that ministers, as nurturers and caregivers, are extended the power of relationship. This power, when justifiably accrued, arises out of the establishment of an intimate, supportive presence in the lives of her/his parishioners. Personal power is contrary to the unilateral

⁸⁹For an excellent discussion of the nature of clergy authority, see Gary Peluso, "Clergy Authority: To What Shall We Compare It?" Quarterly Review 11, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 43-45. In this article, Peluso describes three images for pastoral authority: parental, corporate executive, and elected official. After analyzing these images, he proceeds to argue that the contemporary cleric's authority is more akin to an elected official's, in that, persuasion (versus coercion) is the principal means of influencing his/her parishioners.

power some clergy attempt to exercise within a congregation. Clergy's personal power is first and foremost, a relational power. This relational power, as noted by D. Bruce Roberts of Christian Theological Seminary, "is dependent upon relationship and will disappear if the relationship is broken or if the power is misused."⁹⁰ The question before the clergy person is not whether he/she has power, but to what use of that power is she/he called? Ordination should signal the Church's call to the responsible stewardship of this power.

Clearly, the call of the New Testament is not to amass power for personal use or privilege, but to use that power in a transforming manner. In fact, Christian leaders are called upon to distribute power to church members in the interest of enablement. If one is to understand Eph. 4:11-12 correctly then empowerment of the laity is precisely the task of the Christian leader:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

The word translated as "perfecting" comes from the Greek root katartisis, whose verb form is katartizō. This word means "to equip, train, impart knowledge and skill;

⁹⁰D. Bruce Roberts, "Power and Servanthood: Emerging Notions for Church Leadership," Encounter 48, no. 1 (Winter 1987): 86.

also to restore to former usefulness."⁹¹ One could easily translate this word "empower," especially since it was frequently used to describe the work of ancient physicians in healing the sick.⁹² This understanding is clearly in line with Jesus' tradition, where the lordly use of power is condemned. Mark presents Jesus instructing his disciples:

You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.⁹³

This image of the servant-pastor immediately sets her/him at variance with much of the larger culture's understanding of the nature and purpose of power where, in many places, power is to be gathered, not given away. But in the Christian tradition, "the idea that power and servanthood are coherent concepts is deeply rooted."⁹⁴ Indeed, they are "complementary concepts."⁹⁵ For this writer, empowerment is the process by which the pastor(s) provides training, opportunity, evaluation and authority to

⁹¹Randolph O. Yeager, The Renaissance New Testament, vol. 14 (Gretna, La.: Pelican, 1983), 283.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Mark 10:42-45.

⁹⁴Roberts, 84.

⁹⁵Ibid.

the members of the Body of Christ in order that they may perform the ministry to which they have been called.

Although each of the factors mentioned in this writer's definition of empowerment is considered important, probably the one which requires some elaboration is the notion of authority. Training, opportunity, and evaluation are vital: yet, without authority, empowerment has not occurred.

Authority is the ability to do one's ministry with the support of and without interference from the pastor. Of course, the empowered believer will have parameters in which to operate, otherwise confusion and even anarchy could result. This also would not give positive witness to the Gospel.⁹⁶ However, observation indicates that some pastors have difficulty in granting members the necessary space to operate. The ministry authority of the members requires an affirmation of the differences in styles of service present in the members. Varieties in method, intensity, and approach are all elements in this matter of different service styles. The point to be stressed is that diversity in style must be guided by a singularity of purpose.

Empowerment includes, but goes beyond, participation. Participation in and of itself may stop at being merely consultative. It may welcome the suggestions, ideas, and

⁹⁶1 Cor. 14:40 is an injunction to "Let all things be done decently and in order." In the setting of worship, this passage has been historically understood as an exhortation to appropriateness and decorum in the context of ecclesiastical life.

the counsel of others without ever seeking to provide that which will help inform that input. On the other hand, empowerment provides that which makes the input of one's subordinates meaningful, useful, valued. Empowering leadership begins with the notion of giving one's self away for the upbuilding of others. Warner Burke, though not writing for a specifically Christian audience, noted why this paradox of empowerment is so confounding to contemporary leaders:

Empowering is not a simple process. Many, perhaps most, people believe that power is a zero-sum quantity; to share power, to empower others is, to lose a certain amount of it. This sharing of a precious commodity, especially for those who have a strong need for power, is a difficult act. Some would say that such an act takes courage.⁹⁷

Burke also notes that empowerment has to be a learned process. He makes it very clear that it is not at all easy to acquire this skill, but if leaders would be successful in the modern age, then an unrestricted commitment to empowerment is necessary.⁹⁸

Clergy Emotional Health

To this writer, here is precisely where the significance of the clergy person's self-awareness, self-assurance, and self-discipline are tested. Admittedly, it is very challenging to remain a well adjusted person while

⁹⁷Burke, 63.

⁹⁸Ibid.

living under the constant scrutiny of public parish life. In fact, the work of nurturing a healthy self-image can be psychologically exhausting. In 1967, Robert Carrigan pointed out the difficulty that many clergy people face while working with a congregation. He wrote concerning the need that many clergy have to merge with people:

For example, one may lose himself in people to the extent that his identity is completely dependent upon others.
"Who am I am becomes what others say I am. Therefore, I am not really myself, but a reflection of the image that others project on me."⁹⁹

Carrigan then proceeds to discuss the damage to the minister's self-esteem which frequently occurs in this type of pastor-congregation relationship.¹⁰⁰ Presumably, damaged self-esteem is one factor which makes it difficult for some clergy to commit with abandon to the enablement of others and not feel threatened.

Guy Mehl, as recently as 1979, found in his study of clergy personality that the quality of relationship between the pastor and parishioners affects the initiative demonstrated by the pastor.

The parson's motivation is directly tied to his life with his congregation, the basic factor of which is the

⁹⁹Robert L. Carrigan, "Psychotherapy and the Theological Seminary," Journal of Religion and Health 6, no. 2 (April 1967): 94-95.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

feeling/nurturing relationship between them.¹⁰¹

However, though it is very affirming for pastors to feel needed and appreciated, Greg Ogden, in a bold piece of writing, points out the hazards of pastors developing a "dependency model" for ministry in local churches. He contends that the dependency model of church life is marked by "a clergy-dominated ministry that does not allow the dependent children of the congregation to become adult Christians."¹⁰² Ogden also argued that "pastoral distrust," "pastoral ego," and "pastoral self-perception," all collaborate to produce an ill family system of co-dependence between the pastor and the church.¹⁰³ His haunting question is one which calls clergy to account for its leadership. Ogden asks, "In what ways do we as pastors hold onto ministry because we don't believe God's people can excel us?"¹⁰⁴

Clearly, psychological security on the part of local church leadership is indispensable if lay preaching is to be recovered in the local church. Such psychological health on the part of the pastor(s) is necessary because effective lay

¹⁰¹ Guy L Mehl, "Nurturing and Mythus Bearing in Clergy Work Motivation," Journal of Religion and Health 18, no. 1 (January 1979): 35.

¹⁰² Greg Ogden, "The Pastor as Change Agent," Theology, News and Notes 37, no. 1 (June 1990): 8.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 8-9.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 8.

preaching will ultimately shift the power dynamics within a congregation. Peter Monckres identified that shift in dynamics. He warned pastors--who might have become comfortable with what one leadership theorist identified as the "greater psychological size"¹⁰⁵ associated with leadership status--that once lay preaching flourishes in a congregation, an adjustment in perspective will be required of the clergyperson in a local church. Monckres admonished:

One warning: if you choose to develop a lay sermons [sic], you must be prepared to become expendable! Once lay sermons develop some momentum, the pastor must be prepared to shift from leader of the community to participant. The pastor who facilitates lay sermons becomes a minister among ministers, and may, at some point, begin feeling that he or she has much less control over the congregation. To facilitate lay leadership becomes a process in which the minister becomes less and less needed [emphasis added].¹⁰⁶

However, this commitment to risk on the part of the minister is probably the clearest evidence of other-centered ministry. It mimics the kenotic ministry of Jesus portrayed in Philippians 2, where Jesus "emptied himself" in the

¹⁰⁵William Lassey, "Dimensions of Leadership," Leadership and Social Change, eds. William R. Lassey and Richard Fernandez (La Jolla, Calif.: University Associates, 1977), 14. Lassey observed that "a leader vested with authority and power necessarily takes on greater 'psychological size' than other members of the group." This writer adds that the pastor must face the reality of her/his stature in the eyes of the congregation, and intentionally find ways to incarnate that authority in the interest of enabling others.

¹⁰⁶Peter Monckres, "Lay Sermons: The Power and the Glory," Christian Ministry 10, no. 2 (March 1979): 32.

interest of humanity's redemption. And although the pastor, as leader, "might lose some of the deference and awe that goes with his or her formal position, [he/she] also becomes recognized as a more rounded human being."¹⁰⁷

In summary, what does the clergy person's psychological readiness have to do with lay preaching. In my estimation, it is highly unlikely that anyone suffering from an absence of psycho-emotional health could psychologically position her or himself to empower the members and in turn celebrate any new autonomous ministry existent in the congregation. If, as Miles pointed out, many clergy use preaching as the principal means to underscore their leadership in a local church, then one can easily understand what resistance might be encountered to this proposal. However, one should be reminded that, whether in the corporate world or the world of the church, Spotts (as typical of the research literature) points out:

Leaders accomplish their work through other people and their success as leaders depends upon their ability to enlist and maintain follower commitment and collaboration for the attainment of group or organizational goals.¹⁰⁸

Of course, this writer is convinced that clergy will be judged, not by the numbers of attendants at weekly worship services, but by their faithfulness in bringing to

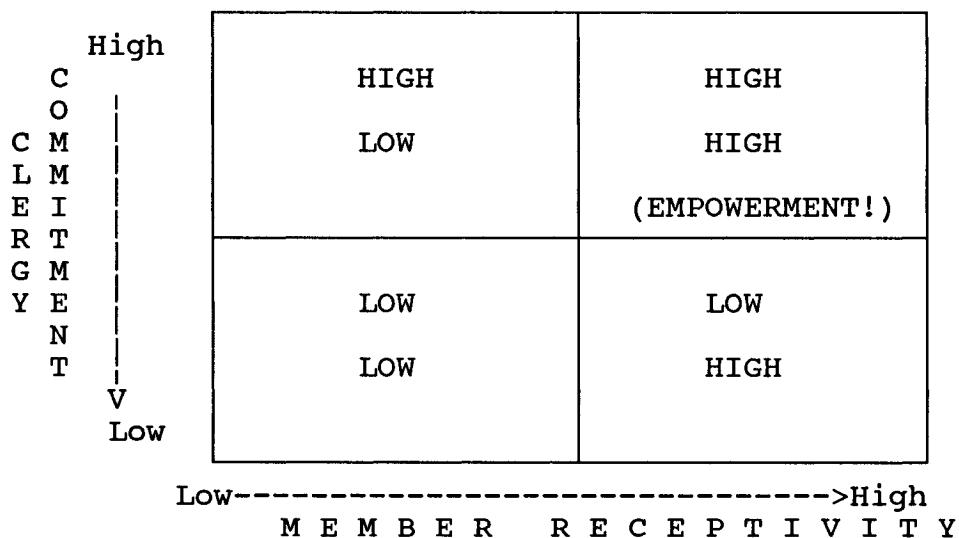
¹⁰⁷Eric Neilsen, "Empowerment Strategies," Executive Power: How Executives Influence People and Organizations, ed. S. Srivasta (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1986), 81.

¹⁰⁸Spotts, 60-61.

intentional service the parishioners who sit in those services. With that in mind, Figure 2 is this writer's depiction of the relationship between clergy-psychological commitment to empowerment, member receptivity to empowerment, and the relationship these two variables have upon the potential for empowerment within a congregation. The quadrants of the square are four of the possible places a pastor and a congregation may be at any given era of their maturation. Of course, these are of necessity general configurations and are not intended to exhaust every possible variation in a congregation.

Figure 2

The Relationship Between Member Receptivity and Clergy Psychological Commitment



LOW-LOW--Where there appears to be a LOW level of commitment to empowerment on the part of the clergy and a LOW level of member receptivity, empowerment appears to be

unlikely. It would be logical to conclude that empowerment under the LOW-LOW combination is virtually impossible.

LOW-HIGH--Where there exists a LOW clergy commitment to empowerment and a HIGH member receptivity to empowerment, it is difficult to see how empowerment could occur.

Conceivably, the laity could induce, inspire, or persuade a pastor to get involved with the process, but it is difficult to imagine how.

HIGH-LOW--Where there exists a HIGH commitment on the part of clergy and a LOW member receptivity, the prospects of empowerment do appear to be more favorable. This belief is predicated upon the awareness that the clergy has a public forum from which to sensitize a local church to the need. Willimon and Wilson cite an inspiring example of one such case.¹⁰⁹

HIGH-HIGH--Obviously, the most favorable climate for empowerment exists when there is a HIGH clergy commitment

¹⁰⁹"For many years the Ossing church had no Sunday School. It had been 35 years since the last Vacation Bible School. By 1983 there was barely a child left to light the candles on the altar. Hopeless was the tenor of all conversations about the parish's future. The pastor went to work. During the summer he made 375 calls. He also spent time finding and training Sunday School teachers. When the prospective teachers were asked to name their greatest fear, they replied, 'What if nobody comes?' But somebody did come; the day Sunday School opened, 30 children came.

"Other things happened. The children brought brothers and sisters. Many had never attended Sunday school. Some parents followed. Their youth group grew to 20. Ten young people were confirmed in 1985 and 12 in 1986; there are now two children's choirs. Last summer's vacation Bible school had 92 participants. The church is now a vital agent of ministry in families and the community." (See Willimon and Wilson, 10.)

and HIGH member receptivity. In that situation, clearly the possibilities seem to be unlimited.

The situation described in the HIGH-HIGH combination is the one in which the enabling pastor thrives professionally. Clearly this situation is optimal. Apparently, this is the situation which characterized the Apostolic Church.¹¹⁰ The churches in which there is an empowering pastor and a receptive congregation appear to be known for their joy, zeal, enthusiasm, and community. One could easily envision this type of church and its pastor(s) embracing the establishment of a ministry of lay preaching with the least amount of resistance.

Obviously, healthy psychological adjustment on the part of the clergy is invaluable if effective lay empowerment is to occur. But what are the indicators of such psychological health? Perhaps, an answer can be found in a fascinating study conducted by Sue Webb Cardwell, Director of Pastoral Counseling at Christian Theological Seminary.¹¹¹ Her study tracked women ministers over the course of 30 years and identified some common characteristics of those who were effective. Cardwell found that successful ministers: (1) used less repression; (2) did more realistic self-appraisal and were better able to manage any problem behavior; (3)

¹¹⁰See Acts 2:40-44.

¹¹¹See Sue Webb Cardwell, "Why Women Fail/Succeed in Ministry: Psychological Factors," Pastoral Psychology 30, no. 4 (Summer 1982): 153-62.

were more open to self-disclosure; (4) were more willing to admit general human faults; (5) were less defensive; (6) expressed a healthy dependence on others, while at the same time took charge of their own lives; and (7) viewed themselves as basically competent persons.¹¹² Cardwell, in summarizing her research of this group, noted that the successful ministers "expressed more confidence in their leadership . . . they were less conservative and more flexible and open to new ideas. . . ."¹¹³

Further, in her article, Cardwell offered some suggestions for how leaders can be assisted in developing greater self-acceptance and personal security. As a pastoral counsellor, she is a firm believer in Clinical Pastoral Education. She feels that CPE

provides for many the first experience of an open, confrontive yet supportive group. . . . one gets feedback on blocks to good interpersonal relationships as well as help with intra-psychic conflicts and self-image.¹¹⁴

Cardwell's second suggestion is that pastors experiencing personal pain (i.e., pain which interferes with their work) should seek personal counseling. She believes that this can ease the trauma of many negative experiences.¹¹⁵

¹¹²Cardwell, 159.

¹¹³Ibid., 155.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 161.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

A third suggestion of Cardwell is for pastors to join a support group which uses prayer, sharing, Gestalt therapy, and any other supportive small group dynamics which may be deemed helpful.¹¹⁶ It is this writer's opinion that Cardwell's suggestions merit serious consideration, for they could be the means of releasing many clergy persons from psychological baggage which inhibits ministry of empowerment.

Pedagogical Essentials

Though no one pastor should be expected to possess every gift or ability, it does appear that a multiplicity of skills--used in the proper balances--lend themselves to an effective ministry. Clergy researcher Allen Nauss found in his study of a selected group of clergy persons that

[a]n effective style [in clergy]
requires more than just above average
performance in a set of leader
behaviors. The effective pastor is also
able to apply the skills appropriately
in a particular function and with
suitable balance.¹¹⁷

If one accepts Nauss' findings, then no talent is more vital in a pastor than the ability to teach. Teaching ministry organizes and transmits the pastor's training, insight, and expertise to the local church in a way which makes it usable to parishioners. Perhaps this explains why

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Allen Nauss, "Leadership Styles of Effective Ministry," Journal of Psychology and Theology 17, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 64.

pastoring and teaching are so closely aligned in Eph. 4:11. The epexegetical conjunction (i.e., "and") joining "pastors" and "teachers" in Eph. 4:11 intends a further explanation of its antecedent noun (i.e., "pastors"). One could translate the phrase "pastors, who are teachers." This construction¹¹⁸ also would endorse Trueblood's observation that the "liberated" pastor's first job is teaching.¹¹⁹ Moreover, the ability to teach is never more useful than when one comes to the pedagogical essentials necessary for the recovery of lay preaching. This writer would like to suggest that there are three elements necessary in a useful pedagogy for lay preaching: curriculum, evaluation, and laboratory. However, the foundation for these three is what shall be identified as climatization.

¹¹⁸For a detailed explanation of this grammatical construction, see page 62 of this project.

¹¹⁹Long raises two critical questions concerning whether preaching can be learned. He asks "Can preaching really be learned? The more dynamic preachers, the ones people seem most to admire, often appear to have a certain innate flair, a knack for preaching, that seems more like a gift than a set of skills. . . . We admire their abilities, but we wonder for ourselves if the capacity for effective preaching is within our reach. Can we really learn how to preach, or must we be born with the gift?" (See p. 21.)

With Long, my experience in attempting to teach lay preaching classes indicates the answer is preaching can be learned if the raw materials are present in a candidate. As I understand it, effective preaching requires both art and science, theory and practice. Consequently, if a person is willing to do the hard work of preaching (i.e., study, observe, sense, intuit, listen, reflect, etc.), then the craft can be learned. Of course, my stance presupposes that lay candidates claim a sense of calling. Without this, and the validation of the witnessing community, it is unlikely that anyone will possess the motivation to learn this craft.

Climatization

The first task of the pastor who wants to empower lay persons for the ministry of preaching is deciding to be intentional about the creation of a climate of receptivity in the local church. This requires the creation of a context in which the intentions of the pastor(s) are made fully clear. It is important at this critical point to establish the legitimacy of such a ministry. The establishment of the significance of such a ministry can be accomplished in any number of ways:

- A 3- to 6-month Sabbath/Sunday worship series on lay ministry, spiritual gifts, or the work of the church
- A series of prayer meeting dialogues centered in the book of Acts
- The distribution of printed materials on the subject of lay preaching
- Inviting effective lay preachers to occupy the pulpit on Sabbath/Sunday mornings
- Interviewing lay evangelists during worship services
- Viewing videos of effective lay preachers in action.

These and any other ideas will assist in raising the level of comfort of parishioners with the idea that someone other than the pastor could conceivably be granted by the Holy Spirit the charism of preaching.

Climatization is also important because many parishioners wish to hear "the pastor, the whole pastor, and

nothing but the pastor." At face value, this desire may appear flattering, especially if the pastor does anything from adequate to inspiring pulpit work. But when one examines some of these ostensible sentiments, one may find not only a deep appreciation for the pastor's pulpit prowess, but also a depreciated view of other parishioners. After all, "What can another lay person say to me?" goes the reasoning. The pastor's emphatic response must be "a lot more than many think!" William Skudlarek reflected upon the substantial contribution of lay preachers to the life of the church when he wrote:

While training in accurate exegesis is an essential part of the preacher's preparation, along with a knowledge of the church's tradition of interpreting the Scriptures, such training and knowledge are not sufficient for effective preaching. Equally as important is the preacher's knowledge of the real conditions and situations which make up the life of the people who will hear the word preached. And it is out of this area of knowledge especially that the lay preacher might well be able to bring new life to God's Word. . . .¹²⁰

Lay preachers appear to have what this writer calls the blue-collar edge in that they daily use the eyes, ears, and heart of the everyday member. Their daily matriculation among the unchurched grants them sensitivities that only the most disciplined cleric possesses, and then only after that cleric has made a calculated commitment to listening and

¹²⁰Skudlarek, 506.

reflection. Monckres testified to the profound inspiration experienced by his parishioners (who also had been resistant) from the work of these blue collar preachers in his congregation:

Lael gave sermons on the death of her mother and on the need for religious pluralism. Nick gave a sermon on love. Kitty spoke about her experience of community in the Thursday morning Study group, and the meaning of growing in faith by sharing with others. Claudine, before her death, gave a very meaningful sermon on communication. Walt discussed means and ends in the Christian faith. John spoke about hunger.¹²¹

Surprisingly, Monckres adds, the sermons were so beneficial that "many have begun to ask why we don't have them more often."¹²²

Because of the history of clerical dependency in so many of America's local churches, climatization is indispensable. Otherwise, those who are bonded principally to the pastor(s) might feel betrayed and, consequently, alienated. Therefore, one must begin slowly and seek to win as much support as possible without compromising one's commitment to this ministry.

Recruitment

Having created a practice-ready climate, it is time to recruit lay preachers who feel gifted and called to do this ministry. It is important at this point to communicate

¹²¹Monckres, 32.

¹²²Ibid.

clearly that this will be a class for those who are interested in how to prepare and develop sermons. It will not be a class for those wish to become staff members (that issue can best be handled in a private session). The lay preacher's training class will not be a class for denominational/congregational credentialing (unless previous arrangements have been made with the respective bodies). One must explain that the class will be for those who might be willing, if called upon, to fill the local church pulpit at the necessary scheduled times. The pastor should announce that a local church program is being established, lest false expectations be raised inadvertently.

Recruitment may be done in a number of ways:

- Through public appeals before, during, or after worship.
- By providing and requesting applications.
- During pastoral visitation/calling.
- Through the distribution and review of a spiritual gift inventory, etc.

After the interested are registered, and the weekly class sessions are set for the necessary time duration (e.g., 6, 8, 10 weeks, etc.), the next item needed will be a textbook and a curriculum. For beginners, the simpler and the more straight forward the text the better. This recommendation is predicated upon the assumption that recruitment will yield a broad cross section of persons from diverse educational, social, and/or cultural backgrounds.

Those who wish to do more involved reading can find in-depth works in a bibliography prepared by the instructor. Again, it is important that the first text be a very straightforward primer for preaching so the class members might be exposed to the basics of the trade. Subtleties can be picked up later.¹²³

Curriculum

After these necessary preliminaries are in place, the matter of a curriculum for the development of lay preachers must be addressed. Perhaps at this time it would be well to reflect upon Trueblood's image of the local church as a "small seminary."¹²⁴ If the church--along with being a center for worship and service--is seen as an educational center for the theological formation of its members, then plans should be made for the continuing education of interested parishioners.

¹²³Charles Bradford, former President of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, wrote of an experience he had with the training of lay preachers. He says that he asked them to prepare a critique of his worship sermon. To his chagrin, they did a better job than he had anticipated:

"Pastor, at times it seemed that you had your what in the why section and your why in the place where the what-then ought to have been. How can you explain that?"

Bradford's humorous rejoinder? "You've got to learn the trade before you learn the tricks of the trade! In Preaching to the Times (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., 1975), 83.

¹²⁴Trueblood writes in The Incendiary Fellowship that "people cannot normally learn without a teacher and good teaching is intrinsically an unhurried business. The congregation must, accordingly, be reconstructed into the pattern of a small seminary with the pastor as professor" (p. 45).

Though the intent of this research is to provide a rationale for the revitalization of lay preaching (a curriculum requires further research), it should be noted that the goal of a lay preaching program is the development of the skills required for effective liturgical and evangelistic preaching. Among those skills needed by effective preachers are the ability to:

- exegete passages;
- identify Biblical/theological tools;
- outline the steps from Biblical text to sermon;
- identify preaching resource materials;
- demonstrate effective public-speaking skills; and
- build upon constructive criticism.

Evaluation

Evaluation will prove to be a critical component in the development of lay preachers. Experience has shown that, in the long term, it is better for the pastor to remain as neutral as possible while allowing the class to do evaluations. Class evaluation will allow a broad base of diverse perspectives to enrich any given presenter. It will also enable the pastor to assist any presenter in working through any potentially ego-deflating feedback. Whatever evaluation instrument is employed, some of the following items should be included: biblical/theological integrity, interest appeal, practicality, clarity, coherence, intellectual and emotional appeal, and language usage.

Laboratory

Finally, a practice laboratory will be required. An obvious laboratory will be the worship service.¹²⁵ However, the move from the classroom to the worship service must be carefully thought out. How will the first presenter be selected? It might be wise for the pastor to have the class select their representative. This will assure the lay preacher that he or she has the good faith of the rest of the class members. It will also distribute responsibility for the selection in the event that the first experience is in any way traumatic. Also the fact that the class elects the preacher reduces the possibility that the pastor might unconsciously choose someone on the basis of his/her professional orientation toward preaching. Laypersons might be impressed by other aspects of a presenter's sermon. If the class values a sermon which did not impress the pastor, it might be helpful for the pastor to analyze the features of that sermon in an endeavor to incorporate those elements into her/his preaching. In this way, the pastor functions not only as teacher but also as learner.

The Benefits of a Lay Preaching Program

One reason lay preaching may be deemed so threatening to many clergy persons is because of its utter

¹²⁵It is axiomatic to say that preaching improves with practice. Practice gives the preacher, whether lay or professional, the experience necessary for meaningful praxis. (Praxis is a concept which grows out of liberation theology literature and means the sharpening of action by reflection, and vice-versa.)

unpredictably. After all, if anything will threaten the power interests of the institutional Church, it is lay preaching. First, lay preachers do not make a livelihood via any denominational structure, hence they are virtually immune to the purse string constraints that the paid clergy person carries. Secondly, lay persons, as interface between the Church and larger society, bring to faith and its expression a practicality and a "hands-on-ness" that many professional clerics rarely demonstrate. Effectively and persuasively done, lay preaching may have an impact upon the congregation that sometimes escapes the professional cleric. Finally, lay persons, with adequate training could be perceived as a threat to congregationally or denominationally appointed leadership within the local congregation. This last possibility can be a very real friction point. However, Monckres (who at the time was pastor of the United Church of Christ in Montrose, Colorado), penned what may be considered an outstanding defense of the positive results of a lay preaching program.¹²⁶ In his article he pointed to a number of reasons for the promotion of a lay preaching program. First, Monckres found that "lay sermons are an exercise in the power of discipleship."¹²⁷ Secondly, he noticed that "lay sermons provide fresh experience by exposing the

¹²⁶See Monckres, 31-33.

¹²⁷Ibid., 31.

community of faith to the faith pilgrimages of a wide variety of persons.¹²⁸ Thirdly, Monckres observed that "lay sermons provide new ways to consider the task of active discipleship" by allowing lay persons to become "shapers and sharers" of their own Christian destiny as opposed to "listening to a pastor define faith for them."¹²⁹ Fourthly, lay preaching moves a congregation beyond the "tribal language" of the professional clergy, to an "experience of direct, non-professionalist sharing of faith."¹³⁰ Fifth, lay preaching becomes a "part of community building" in that patterns of relatedness within the congregation are unalterably changed; communication avenues once closed or obstructed are opened.¹³¹ Lastly, Monckres points out that lay preaching changes the lay preachers themselves. It teaches them in a most forceful way to depend upon the presence of the Spirit for personal guidance in their ministry of the word.¹³²

Summary

The essentials proposed in this chapter for the recovery of lay preaching consist of theological, psychological, and pedagogical components. Without these

¹²⁸Ibid.

¹²⁹Ibid.

¹³⁰Ibid.

¹³¹Ibid.

¹³²Ibid.

being operative in a local church, it is highly unlikely that pastors will see the need for lay preaching. But where these are operational in a congregation, the likelihood is that there will be a serious commitment to lay empowerment, of which lay preaching is an expression.

CHAPTER 5

Summary and Conclusions

This project began as an attempt to ascertain when and where in the history of the Christian Church the ministry of preaching became a clericalized activity. It set out in search of answers to such basic questions as: Is there a historical basis for the current monopolization of preaching ministry by modern clergy? Why is most of the preaching in the churches in North America done by professional clerics? Why are clergy persons identified as preachers anyway? At first glance, these questions may seem frivolous. But the answers to these questions hold profound implications for the practice of mission in the Church.

Having examined relevant historical documents from the first four centuries of the Christian Church, it is now possible to put forward several conclusions regarding the historical influences contributing to the rise of the clergy, and the accompanying disempowerment of lay preaching in the post-apostolic age. In the first century, Christianity began as a lay movement. The respective lay founders of the Church were gifted by the Spirit to equip the Church for its service to the world. The basis of their authority was the evidence of the Spirit's call. Beginning with Jesus, these wandering charismatics were the

authoritative leaders of the movement. They were sent by the Spirit to build up the early Christian community. However, the acceptability of their service was not beyond the validation of the community. This is borne out in the Didache. Even the fixed local leadership of the Church was elected by consent of the local believers.

These first-century believers were a religious minority within Judaism and the Greco-Roman world. Therefore, for the embryonic Christian movement to succeed, the participation of every member was necessary. Diakonia (service), koinonia (shared community), and kerygma (word/preaching) devolved upon the Church-at-large. More specifically, preaching was a community privilege. Preaching in the first and second century was a class- and gender-inclusive activity. Rich and poor, male and female, slave and free, all proclaimed the message of the Gospel. Further, the inclusivity of preaching ministry was both a sign and a prohibition. As sign, lay preaching evidenced the mutuality of the early Christian believers. As prohibition, it neutralized the centralization of hierarchical power which ultimately came to define the Church of the Middle Ages.

By the third and fourth centuries, the leadership of the Church increasingly emulated the imperial style of the Empire. Clergy became royal personages. Through the beneficence of Constantine toward the leadership of the Church, leadership eventually succumbed to the weight of

royal favors. Clergy was gradually separated from its original solidarity with the people of God. A newfound status with the Empire was enjoyed. Clergy's rise resulted in the disempowerment lay ministry. The "ministry" (in the popular usage of the word) was born. Concomitantly, the Church-at-large was disenfranchised and de-voiced in the process. Whereas, in the early centuries, preaching was performed by whomsoever was appointed and gifted by the Spirit, by the third and fourth centuries preaching was utilized by the clergy as a means of reinforcing that new ecclesiastical order. Preaching, for the first time in history, became identified with a specific ecclesiastical class. Unfortunately, the ministry of preaching was "placed under the subjection to an official ministry springing out of the congregation. . . ."¹ Though some lay preaching movements arose in history, preaching has not regained the freedom it enjoyed in the early centuries. In fact, preaching has "never regained the recognized position it had in the first century and a half."²

But what of the intervening centuries and particularly the Reformation? It is clear that Luther, though insisting upon the priesthood of all believers, did not implement a structure which would make such a theology operative in the local community of worshippers. Therefore, in spite of the

¹Lindsay, 71.

²Ibid.

few lay preachers who have appeared in the course of history, we conclude that in returning the right to and opportunity for proclamation to all believers, the Reformation is yet incomplete. The priesthood of all believers will remain unrealized as long as certain ministries are effectively restricted to clergy. And it is the view of this writer that preaching is one such ministry.

This present state of affairs explains why a thorough reeducation of Church leadership is necessary for the recovery of lay preaching. One must begin by exploring the theological, psychological and pedagogical paradigms operative in the minds of local church clergy. If the pastor has a biblically correct view of laity, ordination, preaching, and servanthood, then the first steps toward the recovery of lay preaching will be made much easier. Psychologically, pastors must be prepared to take on lesser psychological size in the eyes of the members, while at the same time increasing the profile of her/his parishioners. Ultimately, the promotion of lay preaching in the local church calls upon the pastor to share power in the name of equipping the members. Courage, security, and a commitment to lay empowerment will be vital to the resurrection of this ministry.

The implications of the primary identification of preaching with the professional cleric are profound for the contemporary church. In fact, this principal identification of preaching with a particular ecclesiastical strata

explains why the need for a program of clergy-laity reeducation exists at all. By clericalizing so central a ministry of the Church, the cleavage between clergy and laity appears to be calcified in the present structure. Today, there is almost no Christian body which does not have some form of status division between its paid clergy and its volunteer laity. In more hierarchical organizations (e.g., Roman Catholic, Seventh-day Adventist, United Methodist, etc.), the clergy appears to constitute a designated bureaucracy. The "ministry" makes the decisions, controls the flow of information, sets organizational budgets, etc. As long as these types of decisions remain under the official control of a specialized few, the laity will remain disempowered and, to that degree, unininvolved. Consequently, there is a need for the modern clergy to decentralize itself by redistributing the power which has been entrusted to it.

"But what does preaching have to do with this process?" the reader may ask. Preaching, emerges as the clearest expression of the authoritarianism (or selflessness) of the ministry. Consequently, empowerment will be accomplished only through a comprehensive commitment by the leadership of the Church to reeducate both the clergy and the laity regarding the biblical obligations of discipleship. The laity must in turn commit itself to the shouldering of greater responsibility within the local church at every level of its life: mission, nurture, worship, and administration. It is hoped that a reunification of clergy

and laity will best serve the Church as it seeks to minister in the world.

The next steps in this movement toward the full and equal enablement of the Church should be in the direction of the establishment of schools of lay preaching. The collective Church in North America could be helped inestimably by transforming local churches into training seminaries, where the opportunity to access any and every ministry (based on one's gifts) is made available. Within these local training schools, attention must be given to the development of a well-rounded curriculum which reflects the latest in adult-learning theory. Questions to be answered include: Are there courses besides homiletics which should be taught? How much time should be involved? What teaching methods have been proven to be most effective? Who will train the trainers (presumably local pastors)? What philosophy or philosophies will guide the construction of a curriculum?

The implementation of this vision of the local church as a training center should free the Church to do a greater ministry in the world. It should also take much of the performance pressure off the minister. He/she can then act as trainer, and not carry the burden of doing everything. Unfortunately, many modern churches appear to be spectator centers, rather than training/dispatching bases. It is hoped that the recovery of this vision will make Sabbath/Sunday morning spectatorism a thing of the past.

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